

A mixed methods exploration of the gendered perspectives of  
female sports coaches



A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

by

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# Declaration

Candidate's declarations:

I, [Paula Murray], hereby certify that this thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of [insert qualification e.g. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)], Abertay University, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This work has not been submitted for any other qualification at any other academic institution.

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I certify that this is a true and accurate version of the thesis approved by the examiners, and that all relevant ordinance regulations have been fulfilled.

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this project of research was to investigate the perceptions of female coaches and their gendered identities using quantitative and qualitative data. A mixed-methods approach was taken using questionnaires and interviews. Videos depicting a coach interacting with athlete/athletes were shown to participants prior to completing the questionnaires. This method was used in order to investigate if there was a difference in how male and female coaches are perceived because of their gender and investigate if the masculinity/femininity of a female coach would influence others' perceptions of their ability and the coach-athlete relationship. Semi-structured interviews were used to investigate how the influence of gender on perceptions of coaches may have influenced the experiences of female sport coaches. An unstructured interview was conducted to investigate the effect of gender across a coach's career. This thesis has contributed to the body of knowledge concerning how female coaches are perceived and female coaches' experiences in sport. It has advanced the literature on Social Role Theory to the context of sport. The main findings of this research are: (a) female coaches are rated higher than male coaches for relationship quality and empathy when in an emotional scenario, (b) female coaches perceived to be masculine are rated consistently higher within relationship quality and competency in a coaching scenario, (c) female coaches' experiences are affected by their traditional social role associated with gender and by society's gendered perceptions of sport, and (d) there are more factors which discourage rather than encourage the progression of female coaches.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

In the UK women are accountable for 44% of all sport participation (Sport Coach UK 2015). However, despite increased participation in sport, few women are becoming involved in coaching and leadership positions. In the UK only 30% of all coaches are women, yet only 17% are qualified coaches (Sport Coach UK 2015). In addition, only 20% of national governing bodies' board positions are held by women (Women on Boards 2014). A similar trend can be seen in international sport federations and the national Olympic committee; women occupy 15% and 16.5% of board positions respectively (Women on Boards 2014). Thus, sport is still very much a male domain, despite a wider development of women's roles in society. This leads to questions around *why* women, despite increased participation struggle to fully develop their coaching careers.

### *1.0 Women and Work*

Traditionally women were expected to stay at home and men were expected to work in order to secure an income (Scott, Dex and Joshi 2008). Women were assigned the role of homemaker, due to them having children and caring for them and their husbands. Men were assigned to the role of economic provider due to their perceived greater strength which was a necessity due to the manual nature of work (Owen Blakemore, Barenboim and Liben 2009).

The industrial revolution saw the beginning of many women occupying jobs outside the home in order to find paid work (Burnette 2008). In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the majority of women were employed in domestic service, agriculture, textiles

and coal mines (Holloway 2007). The commencement of World War One was a catalyst which saw the number of women seeking employment and in employment increase from 11% pre-war to 40% in 1971 then to 50% in the late 1980s (Oerton 1996).

World War One (1914-1918) created one of the biggest changes in employment history. Large numbers of women became employed to compensate for the loss of the male workforce, who had been conscribed to national service in 1916 (Noakes 2006). The government launched campaigns and recruitment drives to help attract women into work (Wightman 1999). This led to women working in new occupations such as the police force, fire service, engineering roles, civil service and factory work (Braybon 2013). During this time new jobs were also created due to the high demand for weapons (such as at munition factories). The munitions factories were the main employers of women (Wightman 1999). In 1917, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was formed due to substantial losses in the British Army (Noakes 2006). Women were allowed to serve in certain roles such as clerical work and cooking. The following year the Women's Royal Air Force was formed (Brayler 2001). Women's work in the Women's Royal Air Force was focused on clerical work, storekeeping, housekeeping, technical and non-technical (Royal Air Force no date). The percentage of working age women in employment increased throughout the war from 23.6% in 1914 to between 37.7% and 46.7% in 1918 (Braybon 1989, p49).

Women were paid less by employers despite occupying the same roles as men (Webb 1919). Despite working in the same roles they weren't valued as much as male employees (Braybon 2013). Initially there were concerns that at the end of the war, employers would continue to employ women at a lower pay rate, rather than allow men to return to their jobs. However, women were either dismissed from their jobs or

continued to work alongside men at a lower rate of pay (Braybon 2013). Women unhappy at receiving lower wages than men, led the first strike on the issue in August 1918 (Holloway 2007). Female workers on the London buses and trams were the first to go on strike for equal pay with strikes also being held in the South East and London Underground (Holloway 2007). Female munitions workers held a demonstration outside Parliament in November 1918 in order to try and retain their jobs (German and Rees 2012). Despite occupying men's jobs throughout the war, women were still not seen as suitable workers, instead they continued to be viewed as mothers and wives (Braybon 2013). Women were unable to escape their traditional social role. A year after the war ended three-quarters of a million women had lost their jobs (Wightman 1999). Throughout the war women had proved they were just as capable as men to carry out these jobs, however they weren't valued as equals in these positions. The end of the war saw the return of men to the workplace and subsequently to their role as 'bread winner' and a decreased need for women to work outside the home (Duiker 2010). Women returned to their traditional roles. Thus, traditional social roles are deeply engrained in individual's identities and social attitudes and are very difficult to change.

The UK economy, between 1920 and 1930, was in recession leading to high unemployment (Floud and Johnson 2004). Unemployment benefit was available through the Unemployment Insurance Act 1920, however women were not able to claim if they had declined a job in domestic service (Levine-Clark 2015). This encouraged women to seek employment again, but in more traditional/limited female occupations such as domestic work and dress making. At this time the unemployment benefit paid to women was lower than that of men maintaining unequal pay (Holloway 2007).

The marriage bar restricted women's working lives throughout the 1900's. The legislation meant that women had to stop working once they married and this was enforced in the civil service, education sector and production work (Glew 2016). This continued to be enforced despite the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919, which was supposed to ensure workers weren't discriminated against in terms of sex or marriage (Law 1997). The prominence of the marriage bar reiterated societal views that married women should stay at home.

The Education Act of 1918 helped women to become better educated, by increasing the school leaving age to 14 years old (Braybon and Summerfield 2013). It also became easier for women to gain acceptance to university and be employed in professional jobs, such as teaching, due to the Sex Disqualification Act which followed in 1919 (David and Woodward 2005). The changes towards women's education suggested that the perceptions towards women's social roles had begun to change.

Later, during WWII through the National Service (No.2) Act 1941, single aged 20-30 year old women were conscripted by the Government to work in various occupations such as in munition production, ship building, building aeroplanes, air-raid wardens, fire officers and nursing (Noakes 2006). Women were enrolled in the armed forces in The Women's Royal Naval Service, the Women's Auxiliary Air Force and the Auxiliary Territorial Service and were also recruited to the Special Operations Executive who underwent missions in enemy territory (Mason and Reid 2010). The employment of women again increased during the war to almost 90 % of single women and 80 % of married women by 1943 (UK Government 2015).

However, as in World War One, there were concerns over women's suitability to occupy these roles. Women were again initially paid lower wages, although the

government reached an agreement whereby women were paid an equal wage if they occupied the same job as men. However, the majority of employers continued to pay most women a lower wage than men (Purvis 2008). Women managed to gain some equality in February 1943 with settlements through the Personal Injury Scheme 1939 (Rose 2006). Originally, women were entitled to less compensation than men in relation to sustaining injuries at work. However, this changed due to campaigns by trade unions and women in parliament. In addition, war time nurseries were funded by the state in order to support working mothers with child care (Summerfield 2013). At the end of the war, women's employment decreased again due to the men returning from the war to their jobs. Throughout the war women again proved they were just as capable as men to carry out these jobs, however they weren't valued as equals in these positions, but they did gain some equality. The end of the war again saw the return of men and a decreased need for women to work out with the home which resulted in women returning to their traditional jobs (Summerfield 1998). The return of women to working at home demonstrates the continued strength of traditional social roles and the difficulty in changing them.

However, in the post war years there was a demand for workers due to economic growth. Women were encouraged to start working or to stay in work. The welfare state introduced by the Labour government, created job opportunities for women in the NHS such as nurses, midwives and cleaners. The marriage bar was still enforced in occupations such as teaching (Summerfield 1998). However, in the 1950's and 1960's the number of married women who remained in work increased, although women were often asked to leave work once they fell pregnant in order to look after their child and maintain the home (Summerfield 2013). Women continued to campaign for equal pay throughout the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's by joining Trade Unions and striking. Despite

the Equal Pay Act being introduced in 1970 (Holloway 2007), women continued to strike for better working conditions, indicating perceptions of women in employment remained unequal.

The number of women in employment has continued to rise since the 1970s (Office for National Statistics 2013). Women have improved their terms of employment by gaining the right to maternity leave and Equality Act (2010). The Equality Act (2010) was introduced to promote equality between men and women in the workplace and education. The legislation emphasises that men and women are to be treated the same. However, gender discrimination in the workplace still occurs even with the Equality Act being in place and numerous cases are reported each year (De Laat 2007). These legislative changes have challenged how women are viewed and treated legally.

However women are still perceived in relation to their social role. Women account for 82% of all employed within cleaning, catering, caring, cashiering and clerical work whilst other domains remain to be dominated by men (Office for National Statistics 2013). There is still a tendency for people of a specific gender to occupy certain jobs. The pay gap between male and female full time workers in Britain is currently 13.9% (Fawcett 2016).

Women have increased opportunities and rights to work, however, it is still seen as a women's responsibility to manage the home and childcare (Poduval and Poduval 2009). The management of the home and childcare after a women's working day is known as the "second shift" (Hochschild 1989). Hochschild (1989) estimated that women spent an extra month working 24 hour days per year in comparison to their husbands. Men have increased the amount of work they do at home (Bianchi, Sayer, Milkie and Robinson 2012). However, women still do more work at home, it is estimated that mothers in full time employment work a week and a half of 24 hour days more than

fathers per year (Milkey, Raley & Bianchi 2009). The time men and women spend doing housework is unequal; women are more likely to be active in household chores in comparison to men (Hochschild 2003; Stone 2007). Similarly, women on average spend 23 hours per week (looking after family members) whilst men spend just ten hours (Park, Bryson, Clery, Curtice and Phillips 2013). Despite the increases in women working out with the home the management of the home and child care remain to be predominantly their responsibility. Sayer, England, Bittman & Bianchi (2009) suggests that although women are spending more time in employment out with the home, men have not changed their ways by doing more at home. Women's "second shift" at home has an impact on the quality and quantity of employed work women engage in. Women who work have to contend with the "second shift" and the "glass ceiling". The "glass ceiling" effect restricts women's abilities to reach upper management positions; although these roles are visible, they are difficult to obtain (Hoobler, Wayne and Lemmon 2009). The UK government set a target in 2011 that by 2015 a quarter of board directorships in the FTSE 100 would be held by women (UK Government Department for Business 2011). This target has helped to increase the numbers of women in management positions within the UK. In 2014, in the FTSE 100 company boards just 20.7% of directors and 6.9% of executive directors were women (Vinnicombe, Doldor and Turner 2014). The percentages of women in the FTSE 100 company boards increased to 23.5% of directors and 8.6% of executive directors in 2015 (Women on Boards 2015). However, this figure falls short of the target set in 2011. The Women on the Board Pledge for Europe set the target of 30% by 2015 and 40% by 2020 of women on boards of publicly listed companies. (European Union 2012). In 2015, the average number of women on boards was 22.7% which increased to 23.3% in 2016 (European Commission 2016). The percentages shows improvement

in the numbers of women on boards, however, shows how the targets are not being met. These changes indicate the role of women is changing slowly as they start to reach upper management positions, but equally still appears to be an ongoing challenge.

### *1.1 Women in Sport*

Sport mirrors societal norms and provides a context for women to challenge their traditional gendered and social roles. Sport is traditionally a male domain (Norman 2011). Initially, women were encouraged to avoid participation in sport based on medical grounds (Eitzen 2009). It was believed women were too frail to participate and that participation would damage their health. Women were originally excluded from participating in the modern Olympics. Pierre de Coubertin founder of the modern Olympics believed the inclusion of women would be “Impractical, uninteresting, unaesthetic and, we are not afraid to say it, improper: such would be, in our view, this women’s pseudo-Olympiad” (Coubertin 1912, p.111, quoted in Boulange 2000, p.23). Women challenged this belief and steadily became involved in an ever increasing number of sports over time. Women’s involvement in sport was originally restricted in the late 1800’s to sports which focused on an artistic nature, such as gymnastics and dance however, women have in time become involved in traditionally masculine sports (Cashmore and Cashmore 2010). Women were allowed to compete in the Olympics for the first time in 1900. In these Olympic Games women were only permitted to participate in five sports (tennis, sailing, croquet, equestrian and golf) (International Olympic Committee 2016). However, in 2012 women competed in all sports in the Olympic programme (International Olympic Committee 2016). The changes in women’s sport participation mirror the changes in society (Sabo and Runfolo 1980).

In the UK women’s participation in sport is increasing and they are accountable for 44% of all sport participation (Sport Coach UK 2015). However, women in their pursuit



of participation in sport have often faced resistance. Currently a small number of sports institutions remain men only clubs. An example of this is Muirfield Golf Club. The chief executive of the Royal and Ancient club committee, issued a statement in 2013 claiming that women's exclusion from clubs wasn't sexist, but just a "way of life that (some people) rather like" (Duggan 2013). In 2016, Muirfield Golf Club failed to get a two-thirds majority to allow women members to join after a vote with its club members (Corrigan 2016). The club following the result were banned from holding the Open (Corrigan 2016). Muirfield Golf Committee has organised a second vote on this issue (Brooks 2016). The accepted exclusion of women from golf is rapidly decreasing, however shows how the traditional roles of men and women are still apparent in society.

The media broadcast events, write reports and commentate on sport. The way sports events are commentated and produced can either reproduce or challenge the notion that women's sports are less exciting to watch than men's sport (Hallmark and Armstrong 1999). Cooky, Messner and Hextrum (2013) analysed 6 weeks of local news media coverage and national sports news from 2009. The results of the study show that the time spent on covering women's sports in 2009 was the lowest (1.6%) when compared with any other year measured over the previous two decades. Women received little coverage in the media and when they did they were often shown in controversial overtly heterosexual roles.

In recent years, prize money in sport between men and women has become more equal. However, 30% of sports still pay men more highly than women (BBC 2014). The biggest differences in prize money were found in Football, Cricket, Golf, Darts, Snooker and Squash (BBC 2014). In Golf the male winner of the 2014 PGA tour won \$340million, more than five times the amount paid out to the 2015 female winner of the

LPGA (Womens Sport Foundation 2015). However, the World Major Marathon series, Tennis Grand slams and World Surf League pay winners equally (Womens Sport Foundation 2015). Yet, prize money and pay for competitive female athletes is still a contentious issue. For example, Novak Djokovic the world's number 1 male Tennis player, has recently criticised the equal prize money of men and women in Tennis suggesting that men should be paid more as they attract more spectators (BBC 2016). Female athletes occupy only two places on the Forbes list of the top 100 highest paid athletes (Forbes List 2016). Male sport receives a larger amount of sponsorship than women's sport. Sponsorship for women's sport increased leading up to the London Olympics in 2012 to 5.4%, however this decreased to 2% by 2013 (Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation 2014).

Women's opportunities for participation in sport have increased, (Smith and Wrynn 2013) however opportunities remain limited in leadership positions (Acosta and Carpernter 2012) such as coaches or committee members. The number of women on sports boards has increased to 27%, yet 49% of national governing bodies' boards are comprised of a membership of less than 25% of women (Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation 2014). UK sport have set a target to have 25% female representation on all funded national governing bodies sports boards by 2017. Despite a minority of female coaches achieving high profile positions (e.g., Shelley Kerr, the first female manager in Scottish Senior Football and Amelia Mauresmo, Andy Murray's previous coach). Women's progression in sport coaching, as a career/form of employed work, continues to be lag behind advancements seen in other occupations (Kerr and Marshall 2007).

## *1.2 Women in Coaching*

Coaching is a role which is still strongly associated with men (Kamphoff 2010). The majority of individuals involved with coaching are male, except from in sports such as

swimming and gymnastics (Sports Coach UK 2015). Sport and coaching tend to be associated with the traditional forms of masculinity which focus on power, competitiveness and domination over others (Coakley and Donnelly 2003). The strong links between sport and masculinity mean that women working within sport are sometimes seen as a threat to the maintenance of men's masculinity (Chamberlin *et al.* 2008).

Women's participation in coaching is highest at grass roots levels. Women account for 30% of all coaches and make up only 17% of qualified coaches (Sport Coach UK 2015). The numbers of males and females who achieve a level one sport qualification is roughly equal, however fewer women continue to achieve advanced qualifications (Womens Sport and Fitness Foundation 2014). Women account for only 12% of all coaches who hold a Level three qualification or above (Sports Coach UK 2015). Female coaches report facing difficulties trying to progress to higher coaching positions (Kerr and Marshall 2007). The difficulties they face mirrors the challenges' women face trying to achieve upper management positions (Kerr and Marshall 2007; Vinnicombe, Doldor and Turner 2014). Thus it appears the glass ceiling is active within sport.

A large number of female coaches work in coaching jobs that are part-time or voluntary and are significantly less likely than male coaches to have a full time job in sports coaching (Reade, Rodgers and Norman 2009). Shaw and Allen (2009) found that female coaches feel that due to the high competition for jobs it is less likely for them to secure these positions. The prejudice towards women in sport stems from stereotypical ideas such as, that good coaches are perceived to be male (Kamphoff 2010). The perception that females lack the necessary characteristics to be a leader, such as

masculinity and strength which are grounded in traditional social roles hinders their progression in leadership positions in sports coaching (Shaw and Hoeber 2003).

In line with a traditional female social role, they are perceived to have characteristics such as being more caring and nurturing than males (Hardman, Bailey and Lord 2015). Therefore female coaches are perceived to be better at working with children (Messner 2009, Shaw and Hoeber 2003), and therefore more suited to work at lower levels of coaching rather than high performance. Subsequently female coaches are sometimes viewed as less skilled. These perceptions are a barrier to female coaches looking to progress through the ranks of coaching. Yet, female coaches have an advantage, it is easier for female coaches to display higher levels of caring towards their athletes (Hardman, Bailey and Lord 2015). This is partly because women showing care towards athletes are less likely than men to be perceived as inappropriate (Hardman, Bailey and Lord 2015).

### *1.3 The Thesis*

Women have made significant advancements in society since the 1900's. In particular, the number of women in work has continued to rise (Office for National Statistics 2013). The majority of women continue to be employed in cleaning, catering, cashiering and clerical work (Office for National Statistics 2013), jobs which are aligned to their traditional social and gendered roles. Women still face inequalities in work such as the second shift (Hochschild 1989) and glass ceiling effect (Ezzedeen, Budworth and Baker 2015). They also tend to take a more prominent role in household chores than men (Stone 2007). Sport reflects societal changes in women's employment. However, these patterns appear to be exacerbated by the male dominated historical and social cultural context of sport. Women still struggle to gain leadership positions in sport despite their increased participation (Sport Coach UK 2015). Female coaches have

difficulties progressing to high coaching positions (Kerr and Marshall 2007) and to higher levels of coaching qualifications (Sport Coach UK 2015). The aim of this thesis was to explore the gendered perceptions of women in sport coaching. This research addressed the following objectives;

- a) Provide (illustrative) accounts of how the sexed and gendered coaching body is perceived by athletes and other coaches (in various coaching contexts).
- b) Identify and produce examples of how female coaches' personal experiences are gendered in nature.
- c) To produce both quantitative and qualitative data to evidence accounts of the sexed/gendered body in coaching.

Mixed methods research is the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods to attain and analyse data (Creswell 2015). A strength of mixed methods research is that narratives can be used to add meaning to statistical results and vice versa, this helps to overcome the limitations of quantitative and qualitative research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). It allows for a broader research question to be answered as the researcher is not limited to quantitative or qualitative research methods (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). This allows for the collection of broader data which can be used to inform policy and theory. The limitations of mixed method research is that it is more time consuming and the researcher has to learn about both quantitative and qualitative methods (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). The thesis used a mixed method approach to study perceptions held towards coaches and coaches' experiences in sport.

Quantitative research methods were used to collect and analyse perceptions held towards coaches in a video. The results of the quantitative studies revealed significant differences between how coaches (male and female, feminine female and masculine

female) were perceived. These studies prompted the use of qualitative studies to focus on how the difference in gender perceptions may influence experiences of female coaches.

The introduction is followed by the literature review which is presented in two parts. The first part of the literature review focuses on the history of gender studies, feminist theories of gender and Social Role Theory. This part of the review explores sociological and psychological theories of gender and justifies the use of Social Role Theory. The second part of the literature review deals with interpersonal perception, interpersonal perception in coach leadership models, stereotypes of coaches, athletes perceptions of coaches and experience of female coaches. This part focuses on leadership in sports coaching and concludes with an outline of the rationale for research.

The following four chapters focus on my research studies. Chapter three demonstrates the differences in how male and female coaches are perceived because of their gender. Chapter four focuses on how the masculinity/femininity of a female coach would influence others perceptions of their ability and the coach-athlete relationship. Chapter five highlights how gender influences perceptions of coaches and how this has influences female coaches experiences in sport. Chapter six explores the effect of gender across a coach's career.

The last chapter presents a summary of the key findings. The limitations of the thesis are discussed prior to discussing the advancements made to Social Role Theory and Role Congruity Theory. I discuss the original contributions the research has made towards understanding the gendered perspectives of female sport coaches and make suggestions for changes to practice. In conclusion to this chapter and thesis as a whole I briefly summarise the main findings and suggest future research ideas for this topic.

# CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Part One

#### *2.0 History of gender studies*

Sociology prior to 1973 was criticised by Jessie Bernard (1973, p.781) for its lack of research on gender in particular women. Sociology during this period was accused of being a study of male society rather than a study of society (Bernard 1973).

Participants were rarely women and activities deemed to be feminine were not studied (Wharton 2012). However, gender studies, with a particular focus on women and femininity started to become a focus of sociological interest. Rather than explore women and female aspects of society, this research tended to focus on the differences between men and women. Sociology was therefore concerned with the study of gender, which is important as in order to study women successfully this needs to be done in relation to men.

*“Most of the debate about sex differences is angled at proving that women are or are not different from men, rather than proving that men are or are not different from women. If this fact needs explaining, it is enough to point out that the bias of our culture is still patriarchal...”* (Oakley, 1972, p208.)

Men and women need to be studied together as it is important to understand the differences between them and the way they interact (Kimball 2004). Key developments in gender research identified that men and women could differ significantly from one

another which placed more focus on masculinities and femininities (Zosuls, Miller, Ruble, Martin and Fabes 2011). This led to the identification of the ideal forms of masculinity and femininity. The study of gender focused mainly on the division of men and women in the work force (Wharton 2012). Men and women tend to work in certain jobs such as caring roles for women (Huppatz 2009). The terms gender and sex need to be defined as it prevents differences being based on sex.

## *2.1 Feminist Theories of Gender*

### 2.1.1 Ann Oakley

Oakley (1985) was one of the first researchers to separate the term sex and gender.

Oakley defined sex and gender as:

*‘Sex’ is a word that refers to the biological differences between male and female: the visible difference in genitalia, the related difference in procreative function. ‘Gender’ however is a matter of culture: it refers to the social classification into ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’.*

(Oakley, 1972, p. 16).

This indicates that gender has both psychological and cultural implications whilst sex is limited to biological characteristics. Oakley acknowledges that an individual will be male or female, however, the extent to which they show masculinity or femininity isn't assigned by their sex. While sex and gender are related, it is expected that males would exhibit more masculinity than femininity and females more femininity than masculinity, however, this is not always the case.

Oakley believes many of the differences between the sexes are not caused solely by biology but instead are due to social conditioning. Social conditioning is defined as the



sociological processes of training an individual to behave in a manner that is acceptable by wider society (Oakley 1972). The social conditioning of children is due to manipulation, canalisation, verbal appellations and different activities (Oakley 1972). Manipulation is the encouraging or discouraging of a child's behaviour which conforms to their gender norms by parents and family members. Canalisation is the way in which parents guide children's behaviour towards gender appropriate interests. Verbal appellations is the assigning of gender appropriate nicknames to girls and boys. Different activities is the way in which children are encouraged to pursue different activities in line with their gender.

Oakley argues that there is a clear divide in work place roles by men and women and the degree to which these roles are thought of as masculine or feminine is determined by society. Oakley's definition of gender is that it encapsulates all the social differences between males and females.

### 2.1.2 Raewyn Connell

Connell (1987) used the terms *hegemonic masculinity* and *emphasised femininity* in an attempt to understand relationships in male dominated societies. Hegemonic masculinity is concerned with the subordination of women and a heightened focus on masculinities (Connell 2000).

*Masculinity is shaped in relation to an overall structure of power (the subordination of women to men), and in relation to a general symbolism of difference (the opposition of femininity and masculinity).*

(Connell p.223).

It is considered to be the ideal male status which is preferred over all other forms of masculinity (Connell 1987). The status of hegemonic masculinity is only held by a minority of men. In contrast, emphasised femininity is an exaggerated form of femininity focused on the subordination of women with an emphasis placed on submission, nurturing and empathy (Connell, 1987). Hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity are the extremes on the continuum, however, these are the points at which differing degrees of masculinity or femininity are measured. These concepts are based on gender relations; therefore, gender hierarchies are changeable (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). This means that hegemonic masculinity may change to be less oppressive which will help get rid of gender hierarchies (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Connell believes that the media helps to maintain hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987).

### 2.1.3 Judith Butler

Butler (1990) perceived feminism to group all women as the same, reinforcing the position of the division of individuals into women and men. This prevented individuals from defining their own identity and resulted in feminism restricting women's options. Butler disputed the notion that sex caused gender and viewed sex as a political category determined through the power in interactions. She proposed that gender shouldn't be linked to a stable factor such as sex and that it should be adaptable. Butler was concerned with sexual differences rather than the status of male and female interaction (male domination and female subordination).

Butler views gender as a performative act rather than a descriptive category in this way gender is viewed as a verb rather than a noun. She proposes that people engage in acting out their gender through their bodily actions (e.g., body language, speech etc.).

Butler believes gender should be viewed as a changeable factor which would alter dependant on the situation. She views gender as a performance:

*There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; ... identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results.*

(Butler, 1990 p. 25).

Combined, the theories discussed here give an insight into the ways gender has been studied. Oakley (1985) focuses on the distinction between sex and gender and explores women's roles in society. Oakley's work, however, doesn't consider the ability of females to occupy leadership roles instead it focuses on their subordination in keeping with the socio-political context of the time (1970). Butler (1990) views gender as a performance and acknowledges a sex/gender link. Butler (1990) focuses on the differences between the genders rather than on the position of power. Connell (1987) focuses on the ideal form of masculinity and the power of this position in relation to other masculinities and femininities. Although these theorists have contributed to our understanding of what sex and gender are and how they operate within society, the aim of this thesis is to study the gendered perceptions of female coaches. Therefore, *Social Role Theory* will be used in this thesis as it focuses more on the roles these women undertake.

## *2.2 Social Role Theory*

*Social Role Theory* was originally proposed by Eagly (1987) to explain the findings of research into the differences in social behaviours and personality characteristics between males and females. The theory states that differences between male and

female behaviours and personalities that have been observed in numerous studies are the result of the social roles males and females occupy (Early 1987). Social Role Theory is concerned with the role that each gender is perceived to play in society and how this affects an individual's behaviour and personality. The theory's main focus is on the expectations people have of both genders and how this operates in society (Wharton 2012).

The understandings about social groups in society stem from individuals experiences with these groups. Social roles are created when a disproportionate number of a certain group are involved with a particular role (Eagly and Wood 2012; Wood and Eagly 2012). The behaviours which are associated with this role influence the perceived characteristics of the group (Gawronski 2003). For example, traditionally the social role of a woman was to stay at home and in contrast, the male's role was to work to secure an income. Women were assigned the role of homemaker due to them having children whilst men were assigned the role of economic provider due to their greater strength due to the manual nature of work (Owen Blakemore, Barenboim and Liben 2009). These roles have stayed assigned to the genders throughout generations and now shape the behaviours of males and females (Eagly, Wood and Diekmann 2000). These roles are strongly associated with occupations that males and females have. One such role is sports coaching which is seen as masculine (Messner 2009). This is because the expected behaviours and personality of a coach are very similar to the masculine characteristics described by social role theory.

Social Role Theory states that the traditional social roles of males and females have created expectations of the behaviours for both genders which have developed into the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity (Rudman and Glick 2008). Men are perceived to have behaviours which display agency (e.g., independent, assertive, competitive,

aggressive and ambitious). Women are perceived to have communal behaviours such as being sociable, unselfish and open about their feelings (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan and Nauts 2011). Rudman *et al.* (2011) results emphasises how agentic and communal behaviours are assigned to men and women and demonstrates how violations of these qualities are viewed negatively.

The stereotypes of masculinity and femininity act upon males and females, affecting them in a variety of ways; one of which is the roles they occupy in society and how they are perceived by others in these roles. Men and women still tend to occupy their roles of provider and home maker, however, in the last three to four decades the number of women working has increased (Office for National Statistics 2013). However, the social roles of men and women have stayed assigned to them due to the socialisation process, authority figures (teachers and parents) encourage children to learn certain skills and to behave in particular ways depending on their gender (Anderson and Taylor 2007).

Cultural products produced for children such as toys, books, and media devices influence their behaviours and beliefs of children in gendered ways. For example, Barbie places emphasis on feminine qualities such as beauty and Action Man emphasises male physicality (Kramer 2005). This emphasises extreme and idealised forms of masculinity and femininity.

Despite focusing on set gender roles, Social Role Theory takes into account that people have numerous roles in society. An individual's gendered role (to be a man/woman) may sometimes be made insignificant by another role, for example, being a mother. In the workplace it has been found that when women are in leadership positions, this tends to take priority over their other gendered role e.g., being a homemaker (Eagly and Johnson 1990). Bosak, Sczesny and Eagly (2011) and Harrison (2005) found that men and women were only viewed in terms of their gender stereotypes when there was no

job role information supplied. The results of these studies show that role information lessens the extent to which agentic and communal qualities are assigned to men and women.

Women's greater association to communal behaviours makes them seem less favourable to leadership positions. Rudman *et al.* (2011) found that women in leadership positions who exhibit behaviours and characteristics associated with men are viewed as competent as a man however, are less likable and hireable. Catalyst (2010) suggests that the negative views towards women who display agentic traits, forces women to choose between being respected and being liked. This creates problems when they attempt to occupy leadership positions. The results of Rudman *et al.* (2011) and Catalyst (2010) show how women's suitability to be in leadership roles is sometimes questioned by others and demonstrates the negativity they can sometimes face. Women who enact agentic behaviours and characteristics are thought to violate the gender status quo. This is connected to women's traditional subordinate status to men which affects their participation in leadership roles in the workplace. This information highlights how a female coach may face problems when coaching.

Perhaps due to the negative way individuals are seen in gender incongruent roles, men and women still tend to work in occupations which are related to their traditional roles and characteristics (Eagly and Karau 2002). The UK Parliament (2012) showed that most women in employment still work in jobs which are similar to the roles of women in the past. The differing characteristics of men and women result in certain jobs being perceived to be more suitable for either male or female candidates. Success in a job is related to the perceived applicability of agentic or communal qualities as outlined in Social Role Theory (Eagly and Karau 2002). Teaching and nursing for example, are occupations which are mainly occupied by females. The strong association of these jobs

to being caring and aware of the requirements of other people, which tend to be associated with feminine qualities (Huppertz 2009). These are the same ones which make them suited to the role of homemaker (Owen Blakemore, Berenbaum and Liben 2009). Construction is an example of an occupation which is mainly occupied by males. The job is associated with being strong, a characteristic which is associated with masculine qualities (Gurjao 2006). This made them traditionally more suited to the role of economic provider (Owen Blakemore, Berenbaum and Liben 2009).

In the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there has been a change in the acceptance of women in positions of influence and power (Schwanke 2013). However, women still face more opposition than men in trying to prove that they have the necessary skills to become a leader (Eagly and Carli 2007; Hoyt 2010). Traditional gender roles help to predict bias against women in positions of power (Rudman and Kilianski 2000; Simon and Hoyt 2008).

Eagly and Karaus's (2002) *Role Congruity Theory* outlines sex bias in various situations and explains why men and women may be perceived negatively when occupying roles that are perceived to contradict their traditional social roles. It outlines that sex bias occurs when role expectations are conflicting. Men and women are expected to behave in certain ways in keeping with their stereotypical roles. Men are expected to display agentic characteristics whereas women are expected to display communal characteristics (Eagly, Wood and Diekmann 2000). However, if the behaviour expectations of a work role conflict with the behaviour expectations of the individual's gender then they will face bias in that role.

Hoyt and Burnette (2013) researched gender bias in leadership by using a combined approach of role congruity and implicit theory perspectives. Participants in their study

were asked to evaluate two potential political candidates. The gender of the candidates was altered by their name to reflect a male and female candidate. The results of the study showed that traditional (negative) attitudes towards women in authority is related to negative bias towards the female candidate. Participants who had traditional attitudes towards gender roles were associated with having more bias towards the male candidate. Individuals view people in gender incongruent roles negatively if they adhere to traditional gender stereotypes.

Women face bias when in roles of leadership such as sports coaching because there is conflict between their gender role stereotypes and the perceived roles associated with leadership (Eagly 2004). The stereotypes that are linked to males and females add to the idea that women are responsible for looking after the home and people, whereas men are supposed to be in charge (Hoyt 2010). This relates to the agentic and communal characteristics which are assigned to males and females through Social Role Theory (Eagly 1987). Leadership prototypes outline the perceived ideas related to leadership (Forsyth and Nye 2008). Research has found that leadership prototypes are masculine (Eagly and Carli 2007; Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell and Risitkari 2011). Men are viewed as having the necessary characteristics to be a leader because their traditional gender role characteristics are similar to the characteristics needed to be a leader such as ambitious and independent (Eagly 1987). Role Congruity Theory (Eagly and Karau 2002) suggests that the greater the perceived mismatch between the leader prototype and female gender role stereotype will predict that there will be more negative attitudes and prejudice towards a women in a position of power (Eagly and Karau 2002).

Eagly and Karau (2002) found women who are in management jobs tend to be perceived as less competent than men, because they aren't perceived to have the necessary behaviour characteristics. However, women who are seen to be competent in



roles that are perceived to be masculine tend to be disliked (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs and Tamkins 2004). They tend to be perceived to have adopted agentic role behaviours, due to this they are seen to have violated their traditional communal role behaviour (Caleo and Heilman 2014).

Lyness and Heilman (2006) studied the performance evaluations and promotions of upper level female and male managers from organisational data. The results of the study supported that there is a greater lack of “fit” between the stereotypical gender roles of women and managerial jobs in comparison to lower level jobs. Women in managerial jobs performance was rated as lower, than women in lower level jobs and men in managerial or lower level jobs. Women who had been promoted had received higher performance scores than men who had been promoted, indicating that women’s promotions were more strongly connected to performance ratings than men’s. This shows that individuals are more likely to progress, if their gender role matches the job role expectations. If the gender role doesn’t match the job role expectations, individuals have to work harder to get the same recognition. The result of Lyness and Heilman (2006) supports the glass ceiling concept as it helps to explain why women struggle to gain promoted roles. Women in sport also struggle to progress to leadership positions (International Working Group for Women in Sport 2012).

Women struggle to progress in their careers due to bias associated with their gender role. Heilman and Okimoto (2008) studied the bias in employment decisions in traditionally male occupations based on being a parent. The participants were asked to evaluate four potential job candidates; a male with child, a female with child, male no child and a female no child. Parents were rated lower for job commitment, achievement striving and dependability. This relates to the second shift (Hochschild 1989). Due to having commitments to care for children parents are viewed as less dedicated to work.

Mothers anticipated competence was viewed to be the lowest of all combinations. The perceived lack of agentic behaviours was found to decrease these competence expectations. Women who are mothers have a heightened association with their gendered stereotypes (Heilman and Okimoto 2008). This can lead to greater negativity to be directed at mothers than non-mothers when considering promotions (Poduval and Poduval 2009). This is connected with the greater association of mothers to feminine attributes and being less able to show an association with masculine attributes. This presents a problem for mothers who are trying to gain employment in male dominated occupations such as sports coaching. In sport coaching, women are perceived to be better at coaching children due to their association with feminine attributes (Messner 2009). However, female coaches have been viewed negatively by male coaches for acting like the child's mother rather than a coach (West, Green, Brackenridge and Woodward 2001).

Rudman *et al.* (2011) looks at the status incongruity of female leaders and its negative effects. The study identifies the qualities which individuals think males and females should or should not possess. The results show that males should display qualities related to agency and women should display qualities related to communal behaviours. The results also show that men should not display communal qualities and women should not display agency qualities. The study reports that women who display agentic qualities are judged as less likable and hireable than a man with similar qualities, however, are viewed to be just as competent. In the study the agentic woman was viewed as more dominant than the agentic man. The results of this study show that women who show agentic qualities face negative actions towards them. This creates difficulties for women in leadership roles such as sports coaching as they need to display masculine traits in order to succeed in their role. Female coaches feel that in

order to work with their male athletes they have to constantly display a masculine persona (Blom, Abrell, Wilson, Lape, Halbrook and Judge 2011). However, by displaying exaggerated masculine traits this may contribute to increased negativity towards them in their role. This links to Lyness and Heilman (2006) that suggests in order to be successful in a job which has a greater incongruence between gender and the role you need to be better at your job. In sport this may help to explain why female coaches face difficulties trying to progress to higher coaching positions (Kerr and Marshall 2007).

The research on women and gender became a key concept in the 1970s prior to this the focus was predominantly on men (Zosuls *et al.* 2011). Feminist theories are based on the social construction of gender. For example, Oakley (1972) focuses on the distinction between sex and gender, Connell (1987) focuses on the ideal form of masculinity and the power of this position in relation to other masculinities and femininities and Butler (1990) views gender as a performance and believes gender should be considered without relation to sex. Social constructionist theories are useful in defining gender, in relation to sex and how gender operates in society but the focus of this thesis is perceptions held towards female coaches. Therefore, Social Role Theory enables a more psychological lense, focusing on perceptions of individual roles in society. This theory outlines the expected gender roles people assigned to both men and women and the effect this has on their everyday lives (Wharton 2006). Gender roles tend to be insignificant when a woman is in a work role (Eagly and Johnson 1990). However, Role Congruity Theory outlines that sex bias occurs when role expectations are conflicting (Eagly and Karau 2002). The greater the role incongruity between the expected behaviour characteristics of a women and her job role creates greater bias (Eagly 2004). This leads to questions around how female coaches are viewed in sport.

Female coaches could be potentially viewed negatively due to their association with a leadership role and sport. Leadership roles and sport are both associated with masculinity (Messner 2009).

## Part 2

In sport, it is particularly apparent that perceptions of gender norms can affect participation, attitudes and beliefs (Appleby and Foster 2013). The way in which athletes perceive others based on gender has the potential to affect their relationships and experience of sport (Magnusen and Rhea 2009). It is therefore important to understand how these perceptions are formed and applied in coach-athlete relationships. Part two of this chapter focuses on interpersonal perception, leadership, stereotypes in coaching, gender in coaching and women's experiences in sport coaching.

### *2.3 Interpersonal Perception*

*Person perception* is the processes related to forming impressions of others (Smith 1998). Individuals evaluations of others are influenced by their knowledge and established beliefs about the social world (Macrae and Bodenhausen 2000). Categorical information, groups people together by using a category such as gender, age or race and leads to the use of stereotypes (Bodenhausen, Macrae, and Garst, 1998). People tend to use categorical information, for example, a social category such as gender to form impressions of others rather than assessing individuals individually. Bartlett (1932) identified that person perception was led by *schematic thinking*. *Schema* is a mental concept which is based on past experiences and learned association and determines an individual's behaviour when dealing with a previously experienced situation (Schneider 2005). Schema driven approaches to person perception are the most commonly used

approaches in understanding how people form impressions of others (Fiske and Neuberg 1990). Social categories, such as gender, are believed to be a store of information on the traits and expected behaviours of these groups (Bodenhausen, Macrae and Sherman 1999). This process is associated with using stereotype based judgements (Brewer 1988). The use of categorical information helps to form the person perception process, as perceivers can use the stores of information on social categories, to guide the processing of any information and use this knowledge to develop impressions.

The categorisation of individuals into person schemas has an effect on all future interactions (Augostinos and Walker 1999). Clayson and Sheffet (2006) studied students' evaluations after five minutes of interaction with a teacher. The students had no prior knowledge of the teacher and based their evaluations on five minutes of exposure. The results showed significant correlations between evaluations completed after five minutes of interaction with end of term evaluations. This suggests that initial perceptions of individuals are strong predictors of final evaluations. The results of Buchert, Laws, Apperson and Bregman (2008) support the work of Clayson and Sheffet (2006). Buchert *et al.* (2008) study found that students teaching evaluations of their teachers after two weeks of class predicted the end of term teaching evaluations. The students first impressions of their teachers were stronger performance predictors than evaluations which were guided based on their knowledge of the teachers reputation. Together the results of Clayson and Sheffet (2006) and Buchert *et al.* (2008) suggest that initial impressions help to determine future interactions.

The initiation and use of categorical thinking allows perceivers to make the process of person perception easier (Brewer and Feinstein 1999). Fiske and Taylor (1984) discussed perceivers in terms of being a *cognitive miser* which suggested individuals

would use categorical information as a form of efficiency to save time evaluating individuals. For example, athletes tend to assume male coaches are more competent than female coaches (Manley, Greenlees, Thelwell and Smith 2010). Fiske and Taylor (1991) suggested that perceivers should be viewed as a *motivated tactician* an individual who has a choice over the cognitive strategies that they use and selects based on the situation. Similarly, in contrast, Oakes and Turner (1990) suggested instead perceivers should be viewed as a *meaning seeker*, using categorical information in an attempt to understand the social world. Person perception research has been heavily focused on the cognitive miser, motivated tactician and meaning seeker. In person perception, the use of categories and related stereotypes is unavoidable (Fiske and Neuberg 1990).

The use of categorical information leads to easier access to related information following the exposure to an identified category (Devine 1989). This is related to research on semantic priming (Neely 1991). For example, being female leads to associations with child care, subordination and housework (Eagly and Wood 2012). However, if a female has a role which is unexpected, such as a car mechanic this leads to individuals focusing on the nonconformity of her role (Hutter, Crisp, Humphreys, Waters and Moffitt 2009). Category activation seems to be effected by perceivers processing goals (Spencer, Steele and Quinn 1998) and their attitudes towards the individuals in a particular category (Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, Thorn and Castelli 1997). Bargh and Chartrand (1999) suggests that categorisation is an automatic process, as perceivers use categories even when they are not directly expressed and are not related to the task. Visual cues are responsible for the automatic categorisation of individuals (Fiske and Neuberg 1990). The use of categorical information when accessing a previously unknown individual is a strength to a perceiver (Gilbert and

Hixon 1991). Categorical thinking can influence the recollections about others (Hamilton and Sherman 1994). The research on person perception demonstrates how categorisation of individuals into groups, such as gender, which is associated with particular characteristics, as shown in Social Role Theory has an effect on how the individual is perceived.

## *2.4 Leadership Theories*

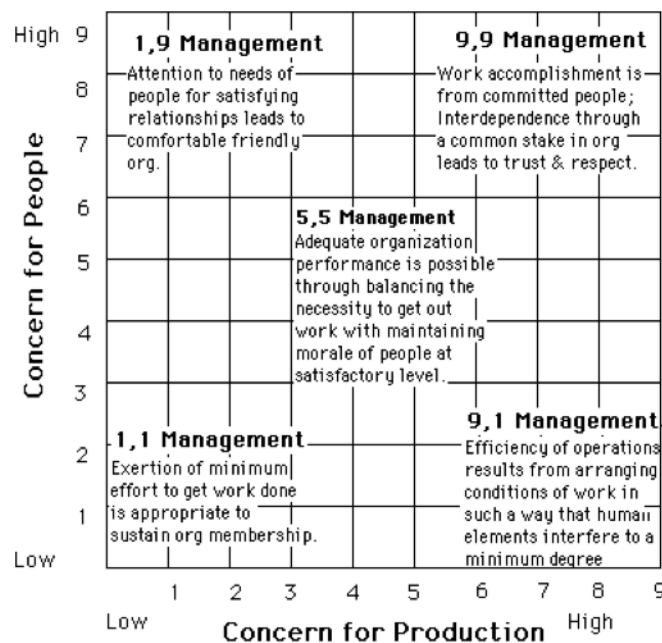
Leadership is a term which is hard to define and has various definitions (Ali 2012). Northouse (2016) acknowledged four factors of leadership, these were: it is a process, involves influence, occurs in groups and involves shared goals. Therefore, leadership can be defined as a process in which one individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a shared goal (Rowe 2007). Leadership theories have developed over time and popularity to them have changed (Grint 2011). Northouse (2010) divides leadership theories into trait, behavioural and contingency approaches however he acknowledges other approaches including, for example authentic leadership.

Leadership research focused on trait based theories during the 20th century (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber 2009). The emphasis of this research was on identifying the traits of good leaders (Bass 1990). It was assumed that individuals were born with the traits, required to be a good leader (Fleenor 2011). Mann (1959) identified intelligence, masculinity, adjustment, dominance, extroversion and conservatism as traits of a leader. Masculinity remains to be an important trait in sport leadership positions (Hovden 2010). Zaccuro, Kemp and Bader (2004) found important leadership traits were cognitive abilities, extroversion, conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness, agreeableness, motivation, social intelligence, self-monitoring, emotional intelligence and problem solving. Stogdill (1948) suggested that a complete list of leadership traits

was unidentifiable. Despite this traits remain to be identified as important in leadership positions (Kirkpatrick and Locke 1991).

The behavioural approach focuses on the behaviour of leaders as opposed to their traits.

Blake and Mouton (1964) developed the Managerial grid which identified different leadership styles. The grid identifies leadership behaviour towards concern for results and concern for people. The two behaviours are measured on a 1-9 scale on the horizontal (concern for production) and vertical axis (concern for people).



*Figure 1-Managerial Grid (Blake & Mouton 1966)*

The leadership styles identified are impoverished management, produce or perish management, middle of the road management, country club management and team management (Blake and McCauley 1991). Impoverished management (1,1) was the result of low concern for people and results. Produce or perish management (9,1) was the result of high concern for results and low concern for people. Middle of the road management (5,5) was the result of medium concern for results and people. Country club management (1,9) approach places high importance on the needs of people but low



importance on results. Team management (9,9) was found to be the most effective style (Blake & Mouton 1964). This approach places importance on high concern for people and results. Female leaders are more likely than male leaders to place a greater emphasis on concern for their followers (Eagly 2013).

The contingency approach to leadership focuses on how different situations require different leadership styles to produce the most effective outcome (Northouse 2007). Contingency theories focus on leader-member relations, task structure and power (Bolden 2004). Leader-member relations is concerned with the relationship between the leader and their subordinates. Task structure focuses on the clarity of tasks. Power is concerned with the amount of power a leader holds over their subordinates (Slack & Parent 2006). Fiedler's (1967) Least Preferred Co-Worker Approach uses a measurement scale to assess task or person orientated leadership styles and offers guidance on when these styles are most effective. The scale requires leaders to rate their colleagues on a scale of 1-8, in regard to 16 bi-polar adjectives such as pleasant or unpleasant.

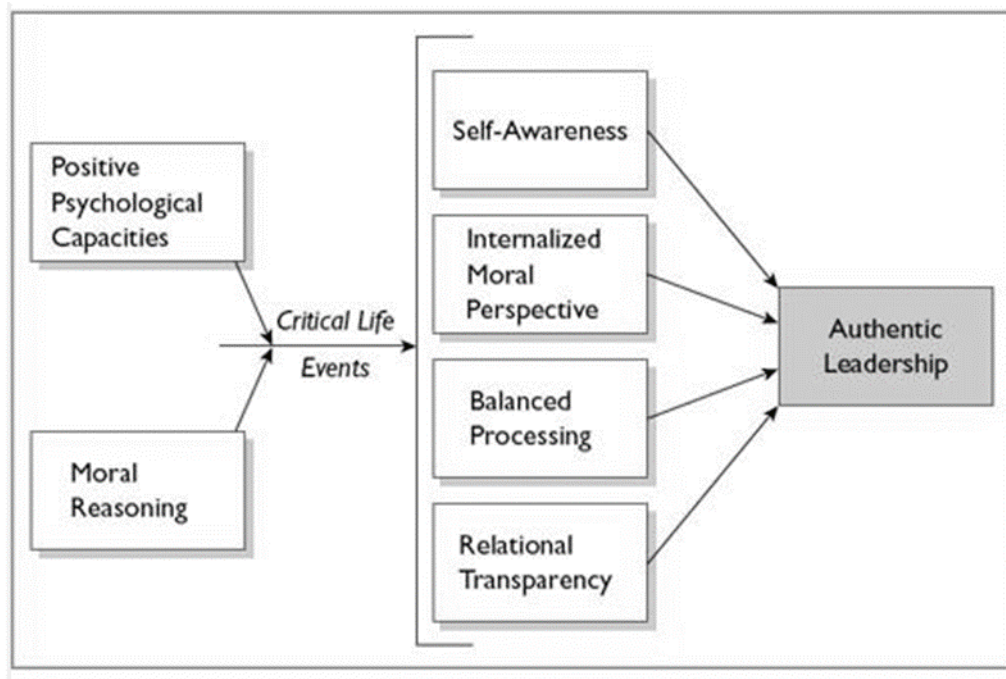
Leader-Member Relations	GOOD				POOR			
	High Structure		Low Structure		High Structure		Low Structure	
	Strong Power	Weak Power	Strong Power	Weak Power	Strong Power	Weak Power	Strong Power	Weak Power
Task Structure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Position Power	Low LPCs		Middle LPCs		High LPCs			
Preferred Leadership Style								

Figure 2-Contingency Model (Fiedler 1967 as cited in Northouse 2007)

A high LPC score is associated with person orientation whilst a low LPC score is associated with task orientation. The leader-member relations, task structure and power must then be considered to determine the most effective leadership style for the situation. Leaders with a high LPC score are most effective in situations where things are going well or when things are going badly whilst a leader with a low LPC score will be most effective in all other situations. The degree to which the leadership style suits the situation will determine the leader's success. Men are more likely to adopt a task leadership style whilst women are more likely to adopt a person orientated leadership style (Eagly & Johnson 1990).

Authentic leadership's main focus is on authenticity, which is being true to yourself (Avolio & Gardner 2005). The theory is still in development and has varying definitions (Bishop 2013). Authenticity has been found to be the most important factor in effective leadership (Kouzes & Posner 2007). Rego, Sousa, Marques and Cunha (2012) found that authentic leadership has a desirable effect on followers attitudes, behaviours and results.

Authentic leadership is defined in regards to intrapersonal, interpersonal and developmental perspectives (Northouse 2012). The intrapersonal perspective is concerned with the leader, their behaviour and experiences (Shamir and Eilam's 2005). The interpersonal perspective focuses on the relationship between the leader and their followers (Eagly 2005). The developmental perspective was defined by Walumba, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Peterson (2008) as "a pattern of leader behaviour that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate "( p.94). It defines four factors of Authentic Leadership which are self-awareness, internalised moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparency (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber 2009).



*Figure 3-Authentic Leadership (Luthans & Avolio 2003 as cited in Northouse 2016)*

Self-awareness is the ability of a leader to understand their assets and flaws.

Internalised moral perspective is the capability of the leader to maintain their own morals. Balanced processing is the ability to make an informed unbiased decision.

Relational transparency is the ability to show and share emotions with others (Gardener Avolio, Luthans, May and Walumbwa 2005). These factors are developed over time and can be shaped by key events in life (Northouse 2016). Authentic leadership is also influenced by positive psychological characteristics (confidence, hope, optimism and resilience) and moral reasoning (Avolio & Gardener 2005). The emphasis is placed on developing qualities which enable the leader to be perceived as reliable and credible (Walumbwa *et al.* 2008). Authentic leadership is dependent on the actions of the leader being perceived as authentic by their followers (Hsieh and Wang 2015). Eagly (2005) suggests it is difficult for women to enact an Authentic Leadership style, this is caused by difficulties gaining followers approval. These difficulties stem from the role

incongruence of the female gender role with leadership positions, which results in prejudice towards women in leadership roles (Eagly and Karau 2002).

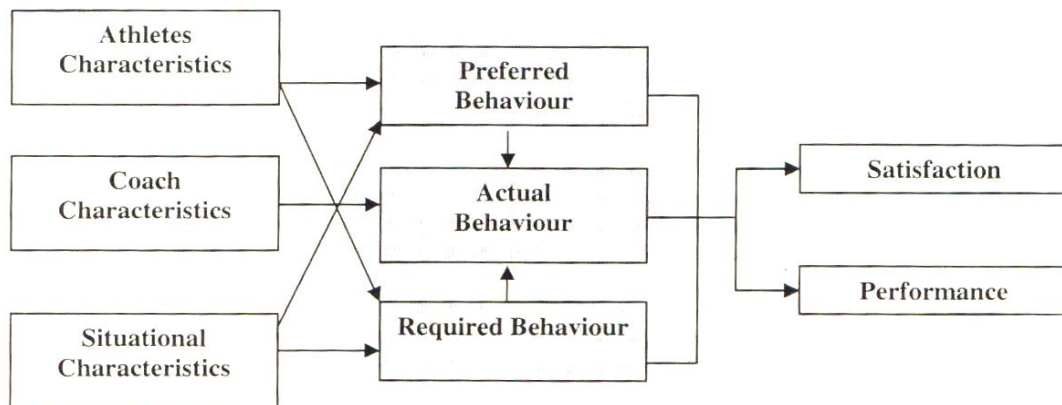
Leadership theories help to define the characteristics, behaviour and situations which have an effect on how good leadership is perceived. Johnson & Lord (2004) suggested that “Ultimately leadership exists in the eye of the beholder” (p.823). In leadership, perceptions held by the leader of their followers and vice versa has an effect on the working relationship (Otara 2011). Interpersonal perception is a key factor in the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett 2007).

### *2.5 Interpersonal perception in Coach Leadership models*

Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence individuals and groups (Barrow 1977). In the coach-athlete relationship, the coach is in a position of leadership over the athlete (Delenaey and Madigan 2009). The models concerned with explaining leadership are the *Multidimensional Leadership Model* (Chelladurai 1993) and the *Meditational Model of Leadership* (Smith, Smoll and Curtis 1978). These models help to explain the processes connected with coaches and athletes perceptions of one another.

The Multidimensional Leadership Model (Chelladurai 1993) is comprised of three dimensions relating to the coaches’ behaviour. The three dimensions are the coaches’ actual behaviour, the behaviour the athlete would prefer the coach to display and the required behaviour for the situation. The three dimensions are each affected by a variety of individual factors such as the athletes’ characteristics, coach characteristics

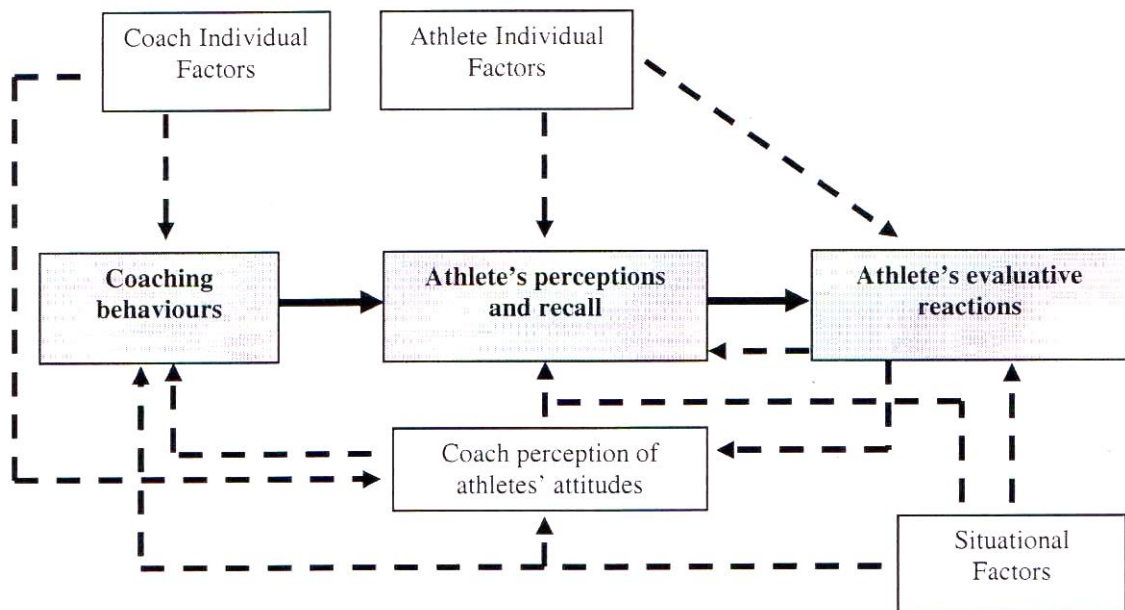
and situational characteristics.



*Figure 4-Multidimensional Leadership Model (Chelladurai 1993)*

The model suggests that the similarity between the three dimensions is positively related to performance and satisfaction. The similarity between the three dimensions will be dependent on the coach's perceptions of their athletes'. In particular, in regard to preferred behaviour and actual behaviour as both of these dimensions require the coach to perceive what their athletes prefer and how their athlete perceives them.

The Mediation Model of Leadership is comprised of three dimensions focusing on coaching behaviours, athletes' perceptions and recall and athletes evaluative reactions. The model focuses on the perception and recall of athletes and how this affects the impact of coaching behaviours. The three dimensions are each affected by other factors such as coach individual factors, athlete individual factors, a coach's perception of athletes' attitudes and situational factors. The Mediation Model suggests that the association between coach behaviour and the relationship outcomes is associated with how the athlete perceives the coaches behaviour.



*Figure 5-Mediation Model of Leadership (Smith, Smoll & Curtis 1978)*

#### *Interpersonal Perception in the Coach-athlete relationship*

The interaction between coaches and athletes is influenced by interpersonal perception. Athletes' perceptions of their coaches has the potential to influence the effectiveness of the relationship. Jowett (2007) views interpersonal perception as a key factor in successful coach-athlete relationships, due to the shared situations and social environment (Wylleman 2000). The coach-athlete relationship is based on similar cognitions, feelings and behaviours of a coach and athlete (Jowett, Paull, Pensgaard, Hoegmo and Riise 2005). Interpersonal perception features in many of the models used in sports coaching. The coach-athlete relationship is hypothetically demonstrated in a variety of models (Jowett 2007). The *3+1 Cs Conceptual Model of Coach-Athlete Relationship* demonstrates how coaches and athlete perceive each other.

The 3+1 Cs conceptual model of the coach-athlete relationship is guided by social exchange theory to produce an integrated model of coach-athlete relationships (Jowett 2009). The model's four core elements are interpersonal psychological constructs which

have traditionally been studied separately (Jowett 2009). However, the study of the interpersonal psychological constructs together is important as the emotions, thoughts and behaviours of coaches and athletes are informally and equally interdependent (Jowett 2005). According to the model, the core elements in the coach-athlete relationship are, *closeness*, *commitment*, *complementarity* and *co-orientation* (Jowett 2007). *Closeness* refers to the coach and athlete feeling that they are close to one another (i.e. liking, trusting and respecting one another; Jowett 2005). *Commitment* is concerned with the coach and athletes decision to carry on their relationship (Jowett 2009). *Complementarity* is the degree to which the coach and athlete make decisions together (Jowett 2007). It is the construct that focuses on teamwork and collaboration between the coach and athlete. Jowett (2005) states that complementarity is a situation where athletes and coaches work together in a friendly, responsive and uncomplicated environment to improve performance. Finally, *Co-orientation* is the interpersonal perceptions that the coach and athlete hold of each other and the extent to which the coach and athlete have a shared understanding (Jowett 2006). Co-orientation is the key component in the 3+1 Cs model. Co-orientation is concerned with the direct perspective (self-perception of their self and the relationship) and meta-perspective (how the individual feels they are perceived by others) (Jowett and Cockerill 2003). Jowett (2005) believes co-orientation to be a key component in the coach-athlete relationship and that it determines its success. Jowett's 3C+1C model places an importance on positive feelings that relate to each aspect of the model and how they affect the relationship (Jowett 2009). However, negative feelings related to each component of the model are also important. For example, incompatible roles such as a female coach with male athlete.

The findings of qualitative studies focusing on closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation show athletes and coaches felt a key aspect in successful coach-athlete relationships was the ability to perceive and understand each other (Jowett 2003, Jowett and Cockerill 2003 and Jowett and Frost 2007).

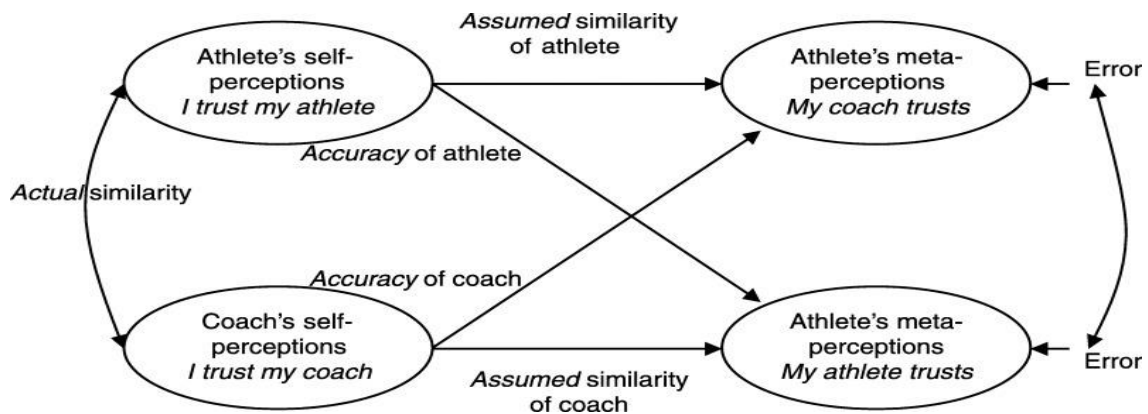


Figure 6-Athlete and coach self and meta perceptions (Adapted from Kenny and Acotelli 2001)

The 3+1 Cs conceptual model of the coach-athlete relationship demonstrates the importance of interpersonal perception in coach-athlete relationships. Jowett's (2007) model allows for identification of areas of concern in the coach-athlete relationship. It can help to identify areas where the coach and athlete perceptions in the relationship are dissimilar. However, the model doesn't take into account how individual differences, outcomes of the coach-athlete or how communication will have an effect on the interpersonal psychological components of the relationship. This model can be used in research to study athletes' perceptions towards coaches.

## 2.6 Stereotypes of Coaches

A range of studies have identified important characteristics for successful coaches (Lyle 2002). Epitorpaki and Martin (2004) found that intelligence and dedication were important, these align more naturally with males than females, however the opposite is



true for sensitivity. Coaches are required to have a variety of skills in order to be an effective coach (Sports Coach UK). A coach needs to have both technical and performance based skills knowledge, planning and performance analysis (Sports Coach UK 2015). Interpersonal skills which are important in the coach-athlete relationship are communication, leadership styles and empathy (Lyle 2002). Technical and performance based knowledge tends to be associated with males, whilst relationship knowledge tends to be associated with females due to their social roles. The characteristics required to be a good sport coach are predominantly associated with males opposed to females (Messner 2009).

Coaches who have high levels of empathy are more likely to have good social interactions with athletes (Lorimer and Jowett 2009). Women are often perceived to be more empathic than men (Mackaskill, Maltbay and Day 2002, Schieman and Van Gundy 2000, Toussaint and Webb 2005, Austin, Evans, Magnus and O'Hanlon 2007, Mestre, Samper, Frias and Tur 2009 and Matrimonotti, Nicola, Tedeschi, Cundari and Janiri 2009). Therefore, female coaches should be more likely to be perceived to have good social interactions with athletes. Pietrzyk and Parzelski (2007) results show that athletes trained by a male coach often want behaviours and traits which are associated with women such as emotional understanding.

Effective coaches are perceived to be supportive and develop relationships with their athletes (Flett, Gould, Griffes and Lauer 2013). Supportive coaching behaviours were associated with sport achievement (Nicolas, Gaudreau and Franche 2011). Women are closely associated with being supportive and placing a greater importance on relationships than males due to their traditional societal roles (Eagly and Wood 2012). This demonstrates that a female coach has desirable characteristics which should enable them to be an effective coach (Messner 2009).

The coach-athlete relationship is believed to be the most important relationship in sport (Jowett and Poczwordski 2007). Coaches and athletes tend to form close relationships as they tend to be involved in each other's lives for a great length of time (Jowett and Meek 2000). The relationship that develops between a coach and athlete professionally and personally affects how the athlete advances in their sport (Jowett 2003). A successful coach-athlete relationship can lead to achievements in sport (Coe, 1996). In the relationship, the coach is in a position of leadership over the athlete (Delenaey and Madigan 2009). Tomlinson and Yorganci (1997) suggest that the traditional roles of the coach and the athlete as leader and follower are particularly pronounced where a male coach is working with a female athlete. Female coaches working with male athletes seem to be the least accepted coaching scenario (Yiamouyiannis 2008).

Jowett and Cockerill (2003) think that by coaches and athletes working together so closely that they become involved in each other's personal lives. This means that the relationship between the coach and athlete is not only sport based as it transfers into other aspects of their lives. Becker (2009) discovered that athletes being able to build a close relationship with their coach contributed to athletes having a good coaching experience. The study showed that athletes who build close relationships with their coach feel it is professional yet personal. The coach-athlete relationship is important as it affects the success of the coach and athlete. A strong relationship between a coach and athlete will mean they will work together towards shared goals (Jowett and Cockerill 2002).

The coach and athlete need to have similar thoughts and feelings in order to translate their interactions into successful performances (Antionini-Phillippe and Seiler 2006). The perceptions athletes have of coaches based on gender will affect how they interact. The interaction between coaches and athletes will be affected by social roles. As outlined earlier in this chapter, the social roles of males and females are changing,

however, despite this, social roles remain to be deeply embedded in society. If a male or female works in a role which is perceived as incongruent to their traditional gender role this tends to influence how they are viewed (Flannigan, Miles, Quadfleig and Macrae 2013). For example, if a male is in a leadership role, such as being a coach, they would tend to align with their social role which is being in a position of power and agency. However, a female in a coaching position may be perceived as less favourable as her position conflicts with her traditional social role (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, and Tamkins, 2004).

### *2.7 Athlete's preferences of coaches' gender*

Gender is used when making initial impressions of coaches. For instance, Manley *et al.* (2008) studied how male and female college and university sport team athletes formed initial impressions of coaching ability. Athletes rated gender as a less influential factor in making impressions in comparison to factors such as facial expressions and coaching qualifications. However, Manley *et al.* (2008) suggests that static cues like gender can be used unconsciously. Female coaches tend to be perceived less favourably than a male coach in particular by male athletes. Additionally, Manley *et al.* (2010) investigated the effect of reputation and gender on a coach's competency. The study required participants to view a photo and description of two coaches before being asked to evaluate the coaches in terms of competency. The results of the study showed that reputation had a bigger influence on an athlete's expectations than gender, however, the results showed that the female coach was rated as less competent than the male coach in terms of game-strategy and technique. This conveys how gender effects the perceptions that athletes have towards coaches.

Research on athletes' preferences towards male or female coaches offers conflicting results. The research findings are inconsistent in determining if athletes hold preferences towards male or female coaches. Williams and Parkhouse (1988) studied the gender biases of female basketball players. The participants were divided into groups based on the gender of their coach and their team's success. The groups were asked to rate their preference between a male and female coach who was portrayed as successful or unsuccessful based on their win to loss ratio. All groups showed a greater preference towards the male coach. The only exception to this was when the participants were given the choice between an unsuccessful male coach and a successful female coach. This study shows that female athletes have a preference towards a male coach. Martin, Dale and Jackson (2001) investigated the gender preferences of adolescent athletes and their parents in relation to coaches. The study found that the gender of a coach was more important to male athletes than female athletes. The majority of male athletes showed a preference to having a male coach whilst the majority of female athletes showed no preference towards either gender. Male athletes tend to show more bias towards a female coach. Habif, Van Raalte and Cornelius (2001) studied the attitudes of athletes towards male and female coaches. The participants in the study were athletes who played Basketball or Volleyball. The results show male basketball players preferred a male coach but didn't have negative attitudes towards female coaches. The results of the Volleyball athletes showed that male and female athletes had no preference towards the gender of a coach and didn't hold any negative attitudes towards either male or female coaches. This potentially shows that the gender association of a sport may influence athletes' preferences towards coaches. Pietrzyk and Parzelski (2007) looked at athletes preferences towards an imaginary coach in relation to their coach's gender. The study looked at the views of judo and

shooting athletes towards their actual coach and the imaginary coach. The study found that male athletes prefer a male coach. This is irrespective of the gender of their actual coach. The results of the study show that athletes trained by a male coach want behaviours and traits which are associated with women such as emotional understanding and support. The results of the study suggest that when working with male athletes, a coach should show traditional male behaviours such as self-confidence, initiative and activeness.

Magnusen and Rhea (2009) studied the attitudes of division one American college athletes (male and female) towards male and female strength and conditioning coaches. The male participants were all American football players, whilst the female athletes were volleyball and soccer players. The study concluded that male athletes were more comfortable having a male coach than a female coach. The male athletes in the study didn't just prefer to work with a male coach, they also displayed negative feelings towards having a female coach. The results may be due to the male athletes' experiences working with predominantly male coaches and due to American footballs strong association with masculinity. The female athletes in this study showed no preference towards either coach and didn't show negative feelings towards having a female coach. Kalin and Waldron (2015) studied the preferences of female basketball players towards male and female head coaches. The results show that the female players preferred having a male head coach. Athletes tended to hold a preference towards the gender of a head coach based on their past experience.

The study by Manley *et al.* (2010) conflicts with Magnusen and Rhea (2009) study's findings on negative attitudes towards having a female coach. The difference in results may be caused by the difference in the type of coach outlined in the questionnaire scenarios. Manley *et al.* (2010) used a general sports coach however Magnuson and

Rhea (2009) focused on a strength and conditioning coach. This suggests that female athletes may have different attitudes in relation to gender towards general sport and strength and conditioning coaches. These differences may have occurred due to the lack of experience working with female strength and conditioning coaches and the association between strength and conditioning and masculinity.

Medwechuk and Crossman (1994) focused on the gender preference of competitive swimmers towards male and female coaches. The results of the study showed that the gender of the swimmers current coach had an effect on the athlete's gender preference of coaches. Male and female athletes also preferred a coach to be the same gender as them. The swimmers rated coaches of the same gender higher in terms of motivating them, want to swim for them and perceived career success. The preference an athlete holds towards a coach is not related to gender but instead based on perceived similarity as suggested by Jowett (2007). The results of this study in relation to the current gender of an athlete's coach conflicts with Pietrzyk and Parzelski (2007). The result of their study suggests that an athlete's gender preference is not related to the gender of their current coach. The conflict in results means that it is still unclear if the gender of an athlete's current coach affects their gender preference towards coaches. The result may occur due to the athletes' familiarity working with a coach of the same gender. The results of this study support Pietrzyk and Parzelski (2007), Magnuson and Rhea (2009) and Martin, Dale and Jackson (2001) as the male athletes showed a preference towards having a male coach. However, the findings of this study in terms of female athletes having a preference towards having a female coach disagrees with Magnuson and Rhea (2009) and Martin, Dale and Jackson (2001). This highlights how the gender preference of female athletes towards coaches is still unclear.

## *2.8 Experiences of female coaches*

With evidence (above) indicating different perceptions of male and female coaches, questions are raised about the experience of female coaches. A body of work dedicated to this matter, reveals clear divisions in experiences. Female coaches' report feeling their presence in sport is not accepted, a commonly held perception being that a good coach has to be male (Kamphoff 2010). Messner (2009) suggests females are often seen as intruders in masculine sports. This is due to the strong links between sport and masculinity which views women working in sport as a threat (Chamberlin, Crowley, Tope and Hodson 2008). Female coaches being viewed as intruders in sport results in the majority of coaches having experienced or witnessed verbal harassment (McKay 1999).

Female coaches are perceived to be less competent than male coaches (Kilty 2006). This is due to their gender role association conflicting with key coaching characteristics. A coach needs to have both technical and performance based skills but also interpersonal skills (Lyle 2002). Males tend to be associated with technical and performance based skills whilst interpersonal skills are associated with females. Kamphoff (2010) suggests that a good coach is assumed to be a male. Females tend to have to prove their ability to coach whilst males' ability is automatically assumed (Yiamouyiannis 2008). The majority of female coaches discuss problems gaining respect and suggest that male coaches gain an automatic respect from athletes (Norman 2013). For example, Kamphoff, Armentrout and Driska (2010) reports that females in head coach positions in Division 1 collegiate men's track and field, cross country, tennis, golf, squash, swimming and diving, and rowing teams had difficulties gaining respect from athletes and others involved. Female coaches don't gain instant respect

when working with athletes, however over time it improves, as they prove their abilities in the position (Blom *et al.* 2011). Female coaches having to gain respect from athletes often leads to negative experiences in coaching (Blom *et al.* 2011).

Female coaches report that they feel continually tested, by their male athletes and they feel as if they have to constantly display a strong persona (Blom *et al.* 2011). In order to do this, the coaches had to be strict and disciplined making a conscious effort to conform to traditional notions of their gender role (Blom *et al.* 2011). The female coaches over emphasised their masculine traits in order to gain acceptance. The perceptions associated with female coaches affect how they are perceived and subsequently has an effect on their employability (Norman 2010).

Many female coaches state that they felt they had been discriminated against in terms of employment (Blom *et al.* 2011). Sport being more strongly associated with males creates negative experiences for female coaches in relation to progressing in coaching (Messner 2009). The majority of female coaches work in part-time or voluntary coaching positions (Reade, Rodgers and Norman 2009), only a minority of female coaches manage to secure a full time coaching position, highlighting a possible glass ceiling effect and second shift.

Female coaches also report facing difficulties trying to progress to higher coaching positions (Kerr and Marshall 2007). Coaches feel there are not equal opportunities in terms of job appointment in high level coaching (Norman 2010) because of high competition for jobs (Shaw and Allen 2009) and managers being unwilling to hire them (Kamphoff 2010). Female coaches perceive male managers to be unwilling to hire them due to being perceived to have lower coaching skills and wanting to hire other males (Kamphoff 2010).



Female coaches also struggle to progress in coaching due to difficulties balancing work and family life (Bruening and Dixon 2007). Women on average spend 23 hours per week looking after family members whilst men spend ten hours (Park *et al.* 2013). These time differences have an impact on the work women can engage in. The management of the home and childcare around a women's working day is known as the 'second shift' (Hochschild 1989). The struggle to balance work and family life is made more difficult due to female coaches working in part-time or voluntary positions which often have variable working hours.

Kilty (2006) suggests that female coaches feel they are not supported by other coaches and that there are a lack of female mentors. Similarly, Messner (2009) found that female coaches often feel unwelcome and excluded by their fellow male coaches. They also reported experiencing degrading behaviour by male coaches (Norman 2011) and have difficulties gaining a coaching mentor (Greenhill, Auld, Cuskelly and Hooper 2009). The support of male coaches has been found to be beneficial (Avery, Tonidandel and Phillips 2008) because it helps female coaches to develop their knowledge and expertise (Messner 2009). The difficulties faced gaining a mentor impacts on their ability to progress in coaching.

West *et al.* (2001) reported that a female coach had been accused by a male coach of acting like an athlete's mother. They are perceived to have a greater ability to care for athletes in comparison to male coaches (Shaw 2009) therefore, they are seen as better at working with children (Messner 2009). However, this leads to them being preferred to work in youth rather than performance coaching (Shaw and Hoeber 2003). This preference further contributes to the difficulties female coaches face progressing in sports coaching.

Success in coaching male athletes was believed to be due to their coaching experience, previous experience working with male athletes, being a successful athlete, support from an athletic director and partner and having a strong coaching philosophy (Kamphoff 2010). Coaches felt the reasons there was a lack of women involved in coaching was due to problems with discrimination, gaining respect, balancing work and family and low salaries (Kamphoff 2010).

## *2.9 Rationale for the research*

The coach-athlete relationship is believed to be the most important relationship in sport (Jowett and Poczworski 2007). Interpersonal perception is a key factor in successful coach-athlete relationships (Jowett 2007). The perceptions of coaches and athletes towards one another are important in order to develop and maintain coach-athlete relationships (Jowett *et al.* 2005) and for women's future careers in sport. Gender influences the perceptions of athletes towards coaches (Manley, Greenlees, Thelwell, Graydon, Filby and Smith 2008). Magnusen and Rhea (2009) found that male athletes preferred to work with a male coach, however female athletes in this study showed no preference. Kalin and Waldron (2015) found that female basketball players had a preference towards a male head coach. This demonstrates the conflicts in the research, in regards to athletes' preference towards a coach based on their gender. Female coaches' report having difficulties when working with athletes in particular male athletes (Blom *et al.* 2011, Norman 2013, Kamphoff 2010). They also feel they are discriminated against in terms of employment (Blom *et al.* 2011). However, they are perceived to be more caring (Shaw 2009). The majority of research focusing on perceptions of the sexed body in the coach-athlete relationship is outdated, with the exception of Kalin and Waldron (2015). This work is in need of updating as women

have continued to progress in the workplace and within sport. The methodology used within this research tends to be based on perceptions towards a hypothetical coach described by a verbal vignette. Due to advances in technology this methodology should be updated to include videos featuring a hypothetical coach to make the scenarios more lifelike. Further research is needed on this topic in an attempt to clarify conflicts in the existing research. The perceptions of athletes towards coaches have tended to focus on the sex of a coach rather than the gendered identity (i.e. the degree of masculinity/femininity) of a coach. In order to understand the perceptions of coaches and athletes towards one another, it is of importance to study the gendered identities (i.e. a masculine female coach or feminine female coach) of female coaches, especially as female coaches often enact masculine behaviours whilst coaching. The existing research tends to focus on the experiences of female coaches working at high levels of performance. It is important to gain the experiences of coaches working at grassroots and the lower levels of coaching, as this is part of the career pathway. This research will develop this literature by identifying and producing examples of how female coaches' personal experiences are gendered in nature. The majority of research uses a quantitative or qualitative data to evidence accounts of the sexed/gendered body of coaching however this research will produce both.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON COACH-ATHLETE RELATIONSHIP QUALITY AND EMPATHY**

### *3.0 Introduction*

Coaches play a fundamental function in sport, working closely with athletes to develop physical, technical and psychological improvements through the application of their own knowledge and expertise (Lyle 2002). The coach's role is to enable an athlete to develop higher levels of performance, that the athlete may not otherwise be able to achieve. Yet, the knowledge and expertise of the coach is not the sole determining factor in the success of an athlete. Sport is a shared experience, a complex social environment constructed from subjective interpersonal perceptions (Wylleman 2000). As such, how the coach is perceived by his or her athletes may potentially impact on the effectiveness and ultimately success of the coach.

The interaction between coaches and athletes is in part influenced by subjective interpersonal perception which is embedded in many of the theoretical models used to describe sports coaching. For example, the *Mediational Model of Coach Leadership* (Smith, Smoll, and Curtis, 1978) suggests, that an athlete's experience of sport is a result of the behaviours of a coach. The relationship is mediated by how the athlete perceives and recalls those behaviours. Likewise, the *Multidimensional Model of Leadership* (Chelladurai, 1993) proposes that athletes' performances and satisfaction are the result of the congruence of the coach's behaviour, the behaviour that would be preferred by the athlete, and the ideal or required behaviour for the situation. This suggests some cognitive assessment on both the part of the coach and the athlete. This notion is not limited to models of Leadership. For example, Jowett (2007) describes

interpersonal perception as an underpinning dimension of the quality of a coach-athlete relationship. She hypothesised that co-orientation, which comprises of shared perceptions and the ability to accurately understand a partner's viewpoint, was fundamental to the effectiveness and success of any coach-athlete interaction.

Individuals rely on a series of mental schema regarding roles and situations on which to base their perceptions of others (Fiske and Neuberg, 1990). While these schemas contain information that individuals can use in order to increase the accuracy of judgements, these schemas can also contain biases and stereotypes of individuals due to them being assigned to a particular group (Augoustinos and Walker, 1999).

Stereotypes or biases become widely accepted when a disproportionate number of a specific social group (e.g., gender, race, nationality) are perceived to be involved with a particular role, for example sports coaching (Wood and Eagly 2012). The behaviours which are associated with this role can then come to influence beliefs about the perceived characteristics of those within that group, essentially creating a stereotype or bias regarding a specific group (Gawronski 2003).

In line with this idea, *Social Role Theory*, was originally proposed by Eagly (1987), as a response to the differences in social behaviours and personality characteristics that were observed in men and women. The central tenet of Social Role Theory is that these differences are the result of the traditional social roles men and woman occupy in society and the resulting subjective perception that these roles have a gender bias of either masculine or feminine traits (Eagly 1987). Social Role Theory is primarily concerned with the expectations individuals have of genders, the role that each play in society, and individuals' perceptions and reactions in response to the adherence or violation of these roles (Wharton 2012).

Many roles carry with them gender based stereotypes, with some roles seen as being masculine or feminine (Yoder and Schleicher 1996). However, leadership roles, such as being a sport coach, are often traditionally seen as male roles with masculine traits (Kamphoff 2010). Coaching science literature shows that effective coaching takes place when an athlete's autonomy is supported (Becker 2009). However, traditionally, coach-athlete interactions have been described as a situation in which the coach's control is absolute (Burke 2001). The coach's role, in which they impart their knowledge and technical expertise to the athlete, creates a situation in which the athlete is conditioned to submit to the direction of the coach. Essentially, the role of the coach is perceived to be that of a leader and of authority and conversely the role of the athlete is seen to be that of a follower (Burke 2001). Further, Tomlinson and Yorganci (1997) suggest that the traditional roles of the coach and the athlete as leader and follower are particularly pronounced where a male coach is working with a female athlete.

While it has been noted that the social role of males and females are changing traditional notions of social roles still remain deeply embedded in society. As such, when men or women work in roles which tend to be perceived as being incongruent to their traditional gender role, this tends to influence how they are perceived (Flannigan *et al.* 2013). For example, males occupying a leadership role, such as being a sports coach, tend to be aligned with their social role, being in a position of power and agency. However, a female in a similar position may be perceived less favourably as her position conflicts with her traditional social role (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs and Tamkins 2004).

Eagly and Karau (2002) demonstrated that women in leadership positions, such as sports coaching, tend to be rated as less effective in comparison to men in the same position. This may be in part a result of the fact that many women in leadership roles

place greater emphasis on sensitivity, opposed to men who tend to be more likely to focus on power (Epitropaki and Martin 2004). As such, woman will often violate the traditional roles of the leader/sports coach and in turn be seen as less effective.

Conversely, when women are in positions of leadership and demonstrate agentic traits, more in line with the traditional role of a coach, they are often viewed as less likable (Rudman *et al.* 2011), likely as a result of them violating their traditional gender role. However, women tend to display higher levels of transformational leadership qualities than men (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt and van Engen 2003).

Another widely held stereotype is that women possess a greater insight and sensitivity into the feelings of others than men (Ickes Gesn, and Graham 2000). This suggests that people as a whole believe that there is a differential ability between genders; and so women as a group possess some inherent ability/skill that makes them more empathic than men. However, Ickes, Gesn and Graham (2000) have argued that this only occurs when the gender-role is made salient. As such, in situations where the gender role is violated (e.g., a female coach working with a male athlete) this perception would be expected to be less prominent.

Gender can have an effect on the perception of leadership roles, such as sports coaching. For example, Manley *et al.* (2010) showed that based upon only initial impressions, athletes typically will perceive female coaches to be less competent than male coaches. However, it is important not to overlook that coaching is a social interaction involving both the coach and the athlete (Jowett 2007). As such, it would seem sensible to suggest that the interaction of both the coach's and the athlete's needs to be investigated in relation to gender. Magnusen and Rhea (2009) used a scenario featuring a hypothetical male and female strength and conditioning coach. This demonstrated that male athletes were more comfortable with a male coach and

exhibited negative attitudes towards female coaches. Female athletes had no preference or difference in attitudes regarding the gender of their coach. However, Blom *et al.* (2011) infers that female coaches report that male athletes continually test them as they feel they have to constantly portray a strong persona. Lorimer and Jowett (2010) have shown that a male coach working with a female athlete, a situation that reinforces both the traditional gender and sport-roles (male leader, female follower), was more effective than other gender mixes such as a male coach working with a male athlete, which both supports (male leader) and violates (male follower) traditional gender-roles.

The current study investigated how the gendered interactions of coaches and an athletes gender influences perceptions of a coach and the quality of the coach-athlete relationship. The study used external raters of a coach-athlete meeting in an attempt to help explain the gendered perceptions and social role expectations that are present in coaching environments. The study aim is to establish if the participants' perceptions are influenced by the gender of actors in an affective-laden conversation between coach and athlete. It is hypothesised that gender combinations that reinforce traditional roles (e.g., male coach working with a female athlete) will be perceived as possessing greater relationship quality. Additionally, it is hypothesised that while female coaches will be perceived as having greater empathy than male coaches, this will be significantly less when the gender combination violates traditional roles (i.e., the female coach is working with a female athlete).

### *3.1 Methods*

This study used videos showing different gender combinations of a coach and athlete (male athlete with male coach, female athlete with male coach, male athlete with female coach and female athlete with female coach) having a deselection meeting. Participants



were required to watch all videos depicting the different gender combinations. After each video the participants completed modified versions of the Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire and Questionnaire of Cognitive and Affective Empathy based on the coach in the video.

### 3.1.1 Participants

Twenty coaches (9 males, 11 females;  $M_{age}=39.1 \pm 10.6$ ) and 21 athletes (7 males, 14 females,  $M_{age}=24.65 \pm 9.5$ ) were recruited from a range of team and individual sports. Coaches had been practising for an average of 7.6 years ( $= \pm 5.2$ ) and covered a range of performance levels (recreational = 40%, regional = 40%, national = 15%, and international = 5%). Athletes had been competing in sport for an average of 12.5 years ( $= \pm 9.4$ ) at a variety of levels (recreational = 38%, regional = 19%, national = 19%, and international = 24%).

### 3.1.2 Instruments

*Videotape stimulus.* Four actors were recruited to play the part of a male coach, a female coach, a male athlete and a female athlete. These actors were used to create four 'identical' videos which depicted a coach and an athlete having a private conversation, about the athlete's de-selection from a sports squad for an upcoming competition. The difference between each of the videos was that they depicted one of four possible combinations of the gender of the coach and the athlete. That is a male coach interacting with male athlete, male coach interacting with female athlete, female coach interacting with male athlete and female coach interacting with female athlete. The scenes were filmed on a tripod mounted Panasonic digital video camera (NV-GS50B) with the actors wearing a Yoga EM 102 mini tie clip condenser microphone. All videos were edited using Windows Live Movie Maker.

The script (see appendix 1) focused on the coach having a meeting with an athlete about their de-selection and was written to contain no sport specific references. Each video followed the same script and actors' facial expression, body language and position was monitored and kept consistent. Actors were also supplied with standardised clothing (tracksuits) to wear. The videos were filmed in three parts- an opening scene, conversation and ending. The opening scene was filmed using a wider shot with the camera focused on the coach facing the computer at his/her office desk. The athlete enters the office and is greeted by the coach before taking a seat opposite. The conversation alternates between narrow shots on the coach and the athlete as they say their lines. The ending scene again uses a wider shot and focuses on the coach and the athlete ending their conversation, shaking hands, and the athlete exiting the room. The duration of each video was three minutes.

*Perceived relationship-quality.* Participants perceptions of the quality of the relationship between the coach and the athlete depicted in each video was measured using an adapted version of the Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q; Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004). The questionnaire is made up of eleven statements which are divided into three subscales Closeness (4), Commitment (3) and Complementarity (4). The scale range is from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree). This scale measures the meta-perspective of the participant regarding the coach (i.e., how an individual believes the coach perceives the athletic relationship). Normally this questionnaire is completed by an athlete working with a coach regarding their own relationship but in this case the questionnaire was modified to reflect an inference about the coach's beliefs about the athlete depicted in the video. Three subscales were assessed: Closeness, the coach's liking, trust and respect for the athlete (e.g., 'The coach likes the athlete'); commitment, the coach's dedication to the athlete and intent to

continue working with them (e.g., ‘The coach believes that the athlete’s career is promising with him/her’); and complementarity, the coach’s co-operative behaviours, responsiveness and friendliness towards the athlete (e.g., ‘The coach is ready to do his/her best’). For this sample, the inter-item reliability for closeness, commitment, and complementarity was, 0.94, 0.57, and 0.94 respectively. Inter-item reliability was calculated by Cronbachs alpha and is considered of an acceptable level between the values of 0.70 and 0.95 (Tavakol and Dennick 2011). The inter-item reliability was low for the subscale of commitment.

*Perceived empathy.* Participants perceptions of the empathy the coach had towards the athlete depicted in each video were measured using an adapted version of the Questionnaire of Cognitive and Affective Empathy (QCAE; Reniers, Corcoran, Drake, Shryane and Vollm 2011). Normally this scale is used to measure an individual’s beliefs about their own affective and cognitive empathy abilities, but in this case the questionnaire was modified to reflect an inference about the coach depicted in the videos empathy ability. Two subscales were assessed. *Perspective taking*, a measure of cognitive empathy that captures how well an individual understands what others are thinking and feeling (e.g., “The coach can easily tell if someone else wants to enter a conversation”). *Proximal responsitivity*, a measure of affective empathy that captures how an individual’s emotions mirror those of others they interact with (e.g., “The coach often gets emotionally involved with his/her athletes problems”). The two subscales are made up of statements perspective taking (10) and proximal responsitivity (4). The scale range is from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). For this sample, the inter-item for the sample was, 0.93, and 0.89 respectively. Inter-item reliability was calculated by Cronbachs alpha and is considered of an acceptable level between the values of 0.70 and 0.95 (Tavakol and Dennick 2011).

### 3.1.3 Procedures

The University's Research Ethics Committee granted full ethical approval before the study began. Participants were approached using a variety of means including telephone, letter and email (see appendix 2), and were invited to take part in a study examining how coaches and athletes interact. Participants who showed an interest in taking part were then given a participant information sheet (see appendix 3). All participants completed informed consent before progressing (see appendix 4). Participants watched all four videos over two sessions (two videos a session) separated by a minimum of 24-hours. Videos were presented to the participants in a random order, but each session consisted of one video depicting the male coach and one video depicting the female coach. After viewing each video participants were asked to complete two questionnaires (CART-Q and QCAE) (see appendix 5) regarding the coach they had just watched.

### 3.1.4 Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviations were calculated for each of the subscales. To establish if any of the dependent variables were significantly influenced by the gender of the coach and athlete in each video, a two way repeated measures ANOVA was tested. Effect sizes and paired samples T-Test were used post hoc. Effect size was calculated using Cohen's  $d = \frac{M1-M2}{SD}$  (Cohen 1988). An effect size of 0.2 is small, 0.5 is medium and 0.8 is large (Cohen 1988).

## *3. 2 Results*

Male and female participant data was analysed together after an independent t-test revealed no significant difference. Coach and athlete data was analysed together after an independent test revealed no significant difference. The means and standard

deviations for each subscale are shown in table 1 and 2 while table 3 shows the effect sizes between each pairing of videos across all variables.

*Table 1– Descriptive Statistics (Relationship Quality)*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Closeness</b>		
Male Coach/Male Athlete	4.16	1.28
Male Coach/Female Athlete	4.36	1.16
Female Coach/Male Athlete	4.80	.91
Female Coach/Female Athlete	4.68	1.06
<b>Commitment</b>		
Male Coach/Male Athlete	3.50	1.38
Male Coach/Female Athlete	3.85	1.20
Female Coach/Male Athlete	4.60	2.32
Female Coach/Female Athlete	4.26	1.10
<b>Complementarity</b>		
Male Coach/Male Athlete	3.63	1.48
Male Coach/Female Athlete	3.99	1.37
Female Coach/Male Athlete	4.72	1.22
Female Coach/Female Athlete	4.60	1.21

*Table 2 – Descriptive Statistics (Empathy)*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Affective Empathy</b>		
Male Coach/Male Athlete	2.33	.76
Male Coach/Female Athlete	2.45	.65
Female Coach/Male Athlete	2.65	.40
Female Coach/Female Athlete	2.78	.51
<b>Cognitive Empathy</b>		
Male Coach/Male Athlete	1.95	.82
Male Coach/Female Athlete	2.02	.78
Female Coach/Male Athlete	2.35	.68
Female Coach/Female Athlete	2.37	.72

*Table 3 – Effect size (d) of comparisons between videos*

	Closeness	Commitment	Complementarity	Affective Emp.	Cognitive Emp.
MC/MA & MC/FA	.16	.27*	.25*	.17	.09
MC/MA & FC/MA	.58*	.58*	.80*	.53*	.53*
MC/MA & FC/FA	.44*	.61*	.72*	.70*	.55*
MC/FA & FC/MA	.42*	.41*	.56*	.37	.45*
MC/FA & FC/FA	.29	.36*	.47*	.56*	.47*
FC/MA & FC/FA	.12	.19	.10	.28	.03

MC = Male Coach, MA = Male Athlete, FC = Female Coach, FA = Female Athlete

\* = significant comparison

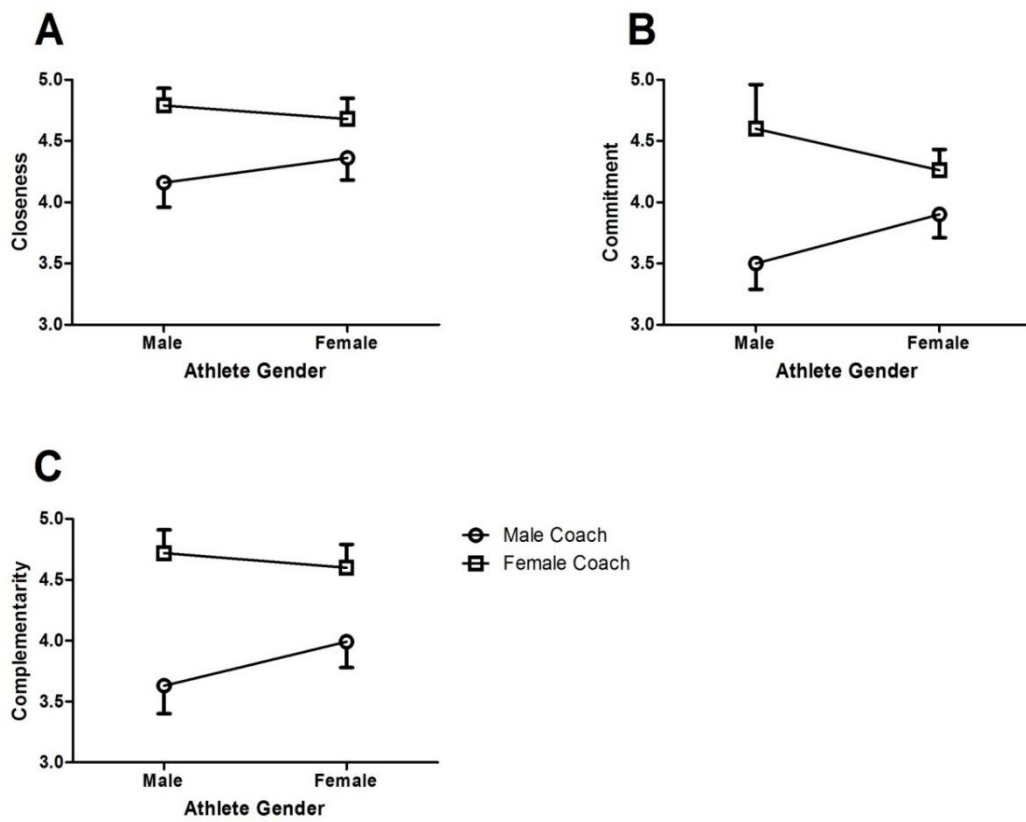
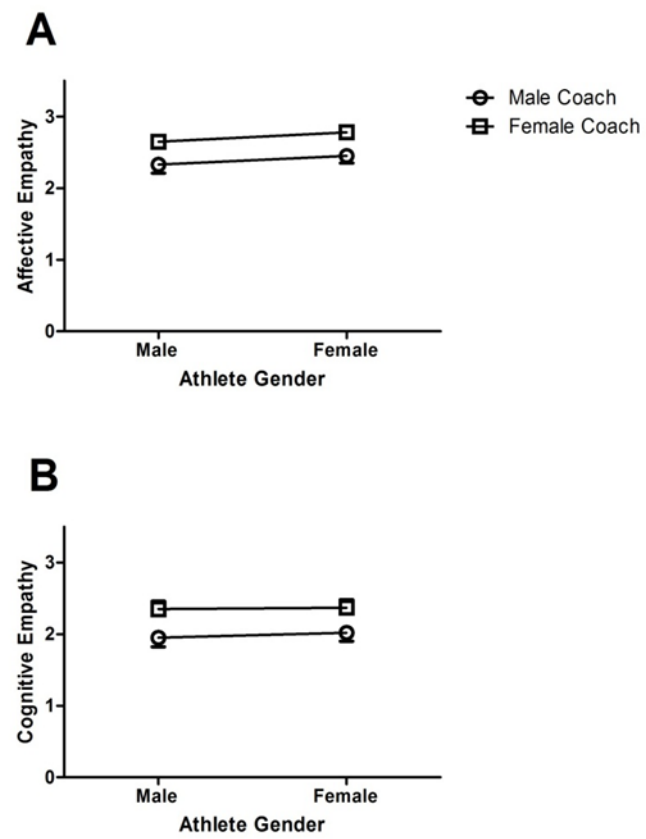


Figure 7-Relationship Quality





*Figure 8-Empathy*

*Relationship Quality* (see table 1). For closeness, the analysis revealed a significant main effect for coach gender,  $F(1, 40) = 8.50, p < 0.05$ , with female coaches being perceived as displaying a greater level of closeness than male coaches (see figure 7-A). There were no other significant main effects. The results revealed that the female coach with male athlete video was scored significantly higher than the male coach with female athlete video ( $d=0.42$ ) and male coach with male athlete ( $d=0.58$ ). The female coach with female athlete video was significantly higher than the male coach with male athlete video ( $d=0.44$ ) and with female athlete video ( $d=0.29$ ). For commitment, the analysis revealed a significant main effect for coach gender,  $F(1, 40) = 9.97, p < 0.05$ , with female coaches being perceived as displaying a greater level of commitment than male coaches (see figure 7-B). There were no other significant main effects. The results revealed that the female coach with male athlete video was scored significantly higher than the male coach with female athlete video ( $d=0.41$ ) and male coach with male athlete ( $d=0.58$ ). The female coach with female athlete video was significantly higher than the male coach with male athlete video ( $d=0.61$ ) and with female athlete video ( $d=0.36$ ). For complementarity, the analysis revealed a significant main effect for coach gender,  $F(1, 40) = 14.77, p < 0.05$ , with female coaches being perceived as displaying a greater level of complementarity than male coaches. The results revealed that the female coach with male athlete video was scored significantly higher than the male coach with female athlete video ( $d=0.56$ ) and male coach with male athlete ( $d=0.86$ ). The female coach with female athlete video was significantly higher than the male coach with male athlete video ( $d=0.72$ ) and with female athlete video ( $d=0.47$ ). Additionally, there was a significant interaction effect,  $F(1, 40) = 4.32, p < 0.05$ , with male coaches being perceived as displaying a greater level of complementarity when working with female athletes (see figure 7-C). There were no other significant main

effects. The results revealed that the male coach with male athlete video was scored significantly lower than the male coach with female athlete video ( $d=0.25$ ).

*Empathy* (see table 2). For affective empathy, the analysis revealed a significant main effect for coach gender,  $F(1, 38) = 9.40, p < 0.05$ , with female coaches being perceived as displaying a greater level of affective empathy than male coaches. The results revealed that the female coach with male athlete video was scored significantly higher in affective empathy than the male coach with female athlete video ( $d=0.37$ ) and male coach with male athlete ( $d=0.53$ ). The female coach with female athlete video was significantly higher in affective empathy than the male coach with male athlete video ( $d=0.70$ ) and with female athlete video ( $d=0.56$ ). Additionally, there was a main effect for athlete gender,  $F(1, 38) = 5.35, p < 0.05$ , with coaches paired with female athletes being perceived as displaying a greater level of affective empathy (see figure 8-A). The results revealed that the female coach with female athlete video was scored significantly higher than with the male athlete ( $d=.028$ ). Similarly, the male coach was scored significantly higher with the female athlete than male athlete ( $d=0.17$ ). There were no other significant main effects.

For cognitive empathy the analysis revealed a significant main effect for coach gender,  $F(1, 40) = 6.40, p < 0.05$ , with female coaches being perceived as displaying a greater level of cognitive empathy than male coaches (see figure 8-B). The results revealed that the female coach with male athlete video was scored significantly higher in cognitive empathy than the male coach with female athlete video ( $d=0.45$ ) and male coach with male athlete ( $d=0.53$ ). The female coach with female athlete video was significantly higher in cognitive empathy than the male coach with male athlete video ( $d=0.55$ ) and with female athlete video ( $d=0.47$ ). There were no other significant main effects.

### *3.3 Discussion*

The purpose of this study was to explore how the gender combination of a coach-athlete dyad influences how a coach, and the quality of their relationship with an athlete, are perceived. It was hypothesised that gender combinations that reinforce traditional roles (e.g., male coach working with a female athlete) would be perceived as possessing greater relationship quality. Additionally, it was hypothesised that while female coaches would be perceived as having greater empathy than male coaches, this would be significantly less when the gender combination violates traditional roles (i.e., the female coach working with a female athlete).

The results showed a significant main effect for coach gender, with female coaches being ranked consistently higher than male coaches across the three dimensions of relationship quality (closeness, commitment and complementarity) ( $p < 0.05$ ). There was also a significant interaction effect with male coaches being perceived as displaying a greater level of complementarity when working with female athletes ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $d = 0.25$ , see figure 7-C). Additionally, while not significant, both male and female coaches were ranked higher across all dimensions of relationship quality when working with an athlete of the opposite gender (see Table 1 and 2).

It was expected that male coaches would score highest overall when paired with female athletes. However, female coaches were ranked consistently higher than male coaches regardless of athlete gender (see Table 1 and 2). This may be due to the focus on relationship quality. Females have been shown to possess greater levels of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership skills, suggesting that they possess greater social skills than males (Mandell and Pherwani 2003). Also, females tend to be perceived as being caring, sociable and understanding, whereas men tend to be seen as assertive and aggressive (Eagly and Wood 1991). The results of this study may be an

artifice of the scenario in which the coach and athlete are discussing the athlete's deselection. If the scenario had been of a practical coaching scenario with the emphasis placed on pragmatic leadership behaviours such as direction and organization, then is it possible the male coach would have been ranked higher in line with traditional leadership/gender stereotypes (e.g., Tomlinson and Yorganci 1997).

While it was expected that male coaches would be ranked higher when working with female athletes, a relationship that reinforces both traditional coach and gender roles (Eagly and Karau 2002), it was not predicted that female coaches would also be ranked higher when working with male athletes (see Table 1 and 2). Magnusen and Rhea (2009) have previously shown that male athletes tend to be more comfortable with a male coach, and Blom *et al.* (2011) reported that male athletes continually test female coaches. This again may be an artifice of the scenario which focuses on the social interaction and discussion between the coach and the athlete. In such a scenario, traditional perceptions of gender interaction may be more prominent than the stereotypes of the coach and athlete roles. In same-gender groups, individuals' behaviours are often more gender stereotyped than behaviour in mixed-gender groups (Fitzpatrick Mulac and Dindia 1995). For example, females in same-gender groups display greater emotion. Conversely, in mixed-gender situations, individuals adjust their behaviour to accommodate their partner (e.g., Deaux and LaFrance 1998). It is possible that despite the dialogue and behaviours being consistent across the videos used in this study that participants were influenced by stereotypes of gender interaction and therefore perceived mixed-gender dyads to be more accommodating and effective than same-gender dyads.

In line with the widely held stereotype that women possess a greater insight and sensitivity into the feelings of others than men (Ickes Gesn and Graham 2000). Results

showed a significant main effect for coach gender with female coaches being ranked consistently higher than male coaches in both affective and cognitive empathy ( $p < 0.05$ ). This stereotype may have caused participants to rank the female coaches higher, despite the dialogue and behaviours being consistent across the videos.

Additionally, there was a significant main effect for athlete gender, with coaches, regardless of gender, being perceived as displaying a greater level of affective empathy with female athletes ( $p < 0.05$ ). Research has shown that female partners tend to be treated in a friendlier manner than male partners (Guerrero 1997). As previously, acknowledged, it is possible that participants were influenced by previously formed stereotypes of how different genders interact in social situations. If this is the case, they may have perceived the coaches to be friendlier and more understanding of the female athletes' situation and therefore inferred a greater level of affective empathy.

While the results of this study offer a greater understanding of how the gender of a coach and an athlete influence how they are perceived, they also highlight the importance of the context of that interaction. In this study the videos depicted a discussion about deselection taking place privately outside of the training environment. This may have created a greater emphasis on the social interaction and communication behaviours of the coach and the athlete. Had the scenario depicted a more traditional coaching environment with instruction and training the emphasis may have been more focused on the coaches' knowledge, practical ability and directive behaviours. This interaction would likely have favoured the traditional gender stereotypes of males (Eagly and Wood 1991). It is important to note that both scenarios are part of a coaches' role (Gilbert Cote and Mallet 2006). It could be argued then that different aspects of the coaches' role favour different skill sets that fall within gender stereotypes; specific scenarios requiring the coach to demonstrate social ability and

understanding (traditional female traits) and in others when the coach must be assertive and directive (traditional male traits; Eagly and Wood, 1991). If this is the case, male and female coaches may be ranked as more or less effective, depending on the context in which they are acting. It would be useful for future research to investigate how coaches are perceived when exhibiting masculine and feminine traits.

The scenario depicted in this study was created to be sport-neutral. That is, no references are made to any specific sport or sport-type (e.g., mentioning a sport name, specific skills or equipment). While this controlled this variable it also meant that the influence of sport-type was not explored. Different sports have a level of perceived masculinity or femininity, often influenced by the gender of those who traditionally participate in those sports as well as the actual activities involved in the them (Koivula, 2001). For example, contact sports such as rugby or combat sports tend to be viewed as masculine while artistic sports such as gymnastics are often seen as feminine. There may be a potential interaction, between the genders of the coach and athlete and the perceived gender association of the sport, which may have an influence on how a coach and the quality of their relationship with an athlete are perceived. For example, where the coach's gender aligns with the sport they are coaching, maybe perceived as more favourable. For example, in combat or contact sports, traditionally seen as masculine sport, it may be that a coach is perceived more positively when they are assertive and directive. As these are masculine traits, the coach is likely to be seen more favourable if they align with their traditional gender roles, that is if the coach is also male (Heilman Wallen Fuchs and Tamkins 2004). It would be useful for future research to investigate how sport-type, particularly highly masculine and feminine sports, influence how coaches are perceived.

In summary, the findings of the present study highlight that the gender of a coach and an athlete play a key role in how they are perceived. Female coaches are perceived more favorably than male coaches when the quality of their relationship with an athlete is judged, particularly in terms of the level of empathy they display. Social Role Theory offers a useful interpretation of the results; empathic behaviours are still perceived to be a more female trait, despite the ever changing roles and position of women in society. This has implications for coaching practice. A coach's gender has an effect on how they are perceived. In particular female coaches may be more suited than male coaches to dealing with emotional situations. The results also demonstrate that mixed-gender coach-athlete dyads tend to be perceived more favorably than same-gender dyads. However, the discussion highlights the probable influence of the context of the coach-athlete interaction. Future research needs to address how the focus of the interaction (e.g., training, competition, administration) influences how coaches are perceived as well as exploring the potential impact of gender-association of specific sports (e.g., combat vs. artistic sports).



# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED MASCULINITY/FEMININITY OF A FEMALE COACH ON COACH-ATHLETE RELATIONSHIP QUALITY, COACH COMPETENCY AND EMPATHY**

### *4.0 Introduction*

Coaches play a key role in sport, working with athletes to develop them physically, technically and mentally by using their knowledge (Lyle 2002). The coach-athlete relationship can be affected by how the coach and athlete perceive each other (Jowett *et al.* 2005). In sport, subjective interpersonal perceptions such as societal gender norms affect participation, attitudes and beliefs (Hardin and Greer 2009). The ways in which athletes perceive others based on gender norms has the potential to affect their relationships within sport and their experience of sport (Smith, Smoll and Curtis 1978)

The interactions that occur between coaches and athletes are influenced by subjective interpersonal perception which is incorporated in the theoretical models used to describe sports coaching. The Mediational Model of Coach Leadership demonstrates the extent to which interpersonal perception has an effect on sports coaching (Smith, Smoll and Curtis 1978). This suggests an athlete's experience of sport is a direct result of the coach's behaviour; this is based on the perceptions the athlete holds towards the coach. The Multidimensional Model of Leadership (Chelladurai 1993) suggests that an athlete's satisfaction is based on the similarity of the coach's behaviour, the behaviour preferred by the athlete, and the ideal behaviour or required behaviour for the situation. The models are each affected by a variety of individual factors such as the athletes and coaches characteristics for example, gender. The leadership models demonstrate the importance of subjective interpersonal perception and *gender* in coaching.

The most commonly used approaches in understanding how people perceive others are Schema driven approaches (Fiske and Neuberg 1990). Schemas hold information on the person's characteristics, mental state and interests of the individual. The use of person schemas leads to a focus on information about people, which is relevant or irrelevant to their person schema. Information which is focused on can be due to biases and stereotypes that can be present in schemas. The categorisation of individuals into person schemas has an effect on all future interactions (Augostinos and Walker 1999). However, in instances where there is a lack of information in a person schema shortfalls are frequently made up for using more generic information based upon social stereotypes (Augostinos and Walker 1999). Stereotypes are groups of beliefs which are held towards a specific group of people (Samovar, Porter and McDaniel, 2009). Stereotypes or biases become widely accepted when a disproportionate number of a group (e.g., gender, race, nationality) are perceived to be involved with a particular role, for example sports coaching (Wood and Eagly 2012). The behaviours which are associated with this role can then come to influence subjective beliefs about the perceived characteristics of those within that group, essentially creating a stereotype or bias about a specific group (Gawronski 2003).

Gender stereotypes can be explained by Social Role Theory. The theory explores expectations people have of both genders and the effect of these expectations on how society functions (Wharton 2012). Men and women have behaviours which they are expected to conform to such as for men being independent, assertive and competitive and for women being sociable, unselfish and open (Eagly and Wood 1991). The social roles of males and females are changing, however, these social roles are still present (Diekmann, Goodfriend and Goodwin 2004). It is becoming more common for males and females to do work, which is perceived to be incongruent with their traditional social

role. However, when a woman is in a leadership position, she may be perceived as less favourable as it conflicts with her traditional social role (Heilman *et al.* 2004). Roles that are often perceived to be masculine, including leadership positions, such as being a sports coach (Messner 2009). Offerman, Kennedy and Wirtz's (1994) research into the traits of a leader revealed that sensitivity, dedication, tyranny, charisma, attractiveness, masculinity, intelligence and strength were important. *Masculinity* is associated with men, however sensitivity is a trait which is associated with women. This suggests that women have communal traits which are desirable in leadership positions. Lord, Foti and De Vader (1984) found that some leadership traits are only considered to be essential traits in a certain contexts. For example, persistence, likability and charisma are considered essential traits in politics, business and sport.

Eagly and Karau (2002) found that women in leadership positions tend to be rated as less effective in comparison to men in the same position. Epitropaki and Martin (2004) suggest this may be due to women focusing more on sensitivity than men who are more concerned with power. However, women when in workplace leadership positions will often "violate" their traditional gender roles and subsequently will be viewed negatively. Rudman *et al.* (2011) found that women who are in leadership positions and display agentic traits tend to be viewed as less likable in comparison to men. However, in sport where a coach's role is to be a leader and an athlete's role is to submit (Burke 2001), a woman who exhibits masculinity and agentic traits may be preferred as a coach in comparison to a feminine woman due to sports strong association with masculinity. Glick, Larsen, Johnson and Branstiter (2005) found that a highly feminine appearance was detrimental to women in high status jobs. The study found that a woman wearing a business jacket and trousers, is perceived as more masculine in appearance than a woman wearing a low-buttoned blouse and no jacket, a traditionally more feminine

appearance. This shows that the perceptions of a women's appearance in terms of their masculinity and femininity has an effect on perceptions.

Sport tends to align itself more naturally with society's ideas of masculine behaviours such as aggression and dominance (Hardin and Greer 2009, Nylund 2007). Women who participate in sport are still typically expected to display femininity (Coakley 2006).

Femininity in sport can be a positive or negative attribute. In some sports such as dance or gymnastics it is a desirable quality, however in strength based sports such as weight lifting or rugby it highlights that women have less physical strength than men (Feasey 2008). Female athletes in sports are associated with masculinity (Krauer and Krane 2006). This shows how masculinity is associated with women involved in sport and suggests a female coach who appears more masculine might be perceived more favourably in this environment.

In literature feminine females tend to be viewed more positively than masculine females. Gaylon and Wann (2012) found that men viewed a feminine female sports fan more positively than a masculine female with the same qualities. Kimlicka, Wakefield and Goad (1982) studied the sex roles of ideal opposites in male college students. The study showed that being a female with high levels of masculinity was a disadvantage, but being a female with high levels of femininity was an advantage. However, it is expected that due to sports strong connection with masculinity that in a sporting environment a masculine female may be preferred.

Empathy is a trait which tends to be associated with femininity. Research suggests that women are more empathic than men (Mestre *et al.* 2009). Lorimer and Jowett (2009) believe that coaches who have high levels of empathy are more likely to have good interactions with athletes. However, it is unclear if the perceived levels of empathy by

an athlete towards a coach would be affected by the perceived masculinity or femininity of a female coach.

The present study is being conducted to establish the perceptions that coaches and athletes hold towards a coach based on her masculine/feminine behaviour and appearance. It is vital for the future development in the understanding of coach-athlete relationships and the careers of female coaches to explore relationships with alternate perceived gender power-hierarchy and gender allotted roles. The aim of this study is to establish if the participants' perceptions of a coach are influenced by the masculinity or femininity displayed by actor in an affectively charged conversation.

#### *4.1 Method*

This study used videos showing a female coach with a masculine appearance and a female coach with a feminine appearance interacting with a group of male and female athletes during a training session. Participants were required to watch two videos depicting a masculine female coach and feminine female coach interacting with a group athletes either male or female. After each video the participants completed modified versions of the Coaching Competency Scale, Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire, Questionnaire of Cognitive and Affective Empathy and The Attitudes of Athletes Towards Male and Female Coaches Questionnaire based on the coach in the video.

##### 4.1.1 Participants

Seventy-three participants (44 males, 29 females,  $M_{age} = 23.8 \pm 8.41$  years) were recruited from a range of team and individual sports. Athletes had been competing in sport for an average of 13 years ( $SD = \pm 8.13$ ) at a variety of levels (recreational = 36%, regional = 38%, national = 20%, and international = 6%).

#### 4.1.2 Instruments

*Videotape stimulus.* Nine actors were recruited to depict a female coach working with a group of four male and four female athletes. These actors were used to create four 'identical' videos which depict a coach leading a conditioning sprint training session with a group of male and female athletes. The difference between each of the videos was that they depicted one of four possible combinations of the masculine/feminine appearance of the coach and the gender of athletes. That is, feminine appearance female coach with female athletes, feminine appearance female coach with male athletes, masculine appearance female coach with female athletes and masculine appearance female coach with male athletes. The scenes were filmed on a tripod mounted Panasonic digital video camera (NV-GS50B) with the actors wearing a Yoga EM 102 mini tie clip condenser microphone. All videos were edited using Windows Live Movie Maker.

The script (see Appendix 6) focused on the coach leading a sprint conditioning training session with a group of athletes and was written to contain no sport specific references. Each video followed the same script and athlete's facial expression, body language and position was monitored and kept consistent. The coach differs in the video-clips in relation to their clothing and body language; this has been manipulated to display more masculine or feminine characteristics. The videos were filmed in three parts- an opening scene, training session and ending. The opening scene was filmed using a wider shot with the camera initially focused on the coach who explains the training session before focusing on the athletes who respond to the coach. The athletes get ready to run and line up at the end of the hall. The coach has short conversations with the athletes throughout the training session, the shots alternate between narrow shots on the coach and the athlete as they say their lines. The ending scene again uses a wider shot

and focuses on the coach giving the athletes a debrief after their session. The duration of each video was 3 minutes. Prior to the study commencing the video was shown to five individuals to ensure good similarity between the videos and the perceived masculinity/femininity of the coach.

*Perceived Coaching competency.* Participants perceptions of coaching competency of the coach in each video was measured using an adapted version of the Coaching Competency Scale (CCS) (Myers, Chase, Beauchamp and Jackson 2006). The questionnaire is made up of 24 questions which are divided into four subscales: motivation (7), game strategy (7), technique (6) and character building (4). Motivation, the ability of the coach to influence the psychological state and skills of athletes ('How competent is the coach in the video in her ability to help athletes maintain confidence in themselves?'); game strategy, the ability of the coach to be a leader during competition ('How competent is the coach in the video in her ability to recognise opposing competitors strengths during competition?'); technique, the ability of the coach to give instructions and advise on technique ('How competent is the coach in the video in her ability to develop athletes abilities?'); character building, the ability of the coach to develop an athlete personally and create positive opinions of sport ('How competent is the coach in the video in her ability to instil an attitude of good moral character?'). The questions assess the subscales using a five point scale. The range is zero (complete incompetence) to four (complete competence). Normally, this questionnaire is completed by an athlete working with a coach regarding their own relationship. In this case, the questionnaire was modified to gauge an inference about the coach's beliefs about the athletes depicted in the video. The lead-in question to this scale has been altered to reflect the use of videos in this study (e.g., 'How competent is the coach in the video in her ability to-'). The questionnaire references to team sports were removed

to reflect a generic sporting scenario. For this sample, the inter-item reliability for motivation (0.94), game strategy (0.91), technique (0.88) and character building (0.79) (Phillips and Jubenville 2009). Inter-item reliability was calculated by Cronbachs alpha and is considered of an acceptable level between the values of 0.70 and 0.95 (Tavakol and Dennick 2011).

*Perceived relationship-quality.* Participants perceptions of the quality of the relationship between the coach and the athletes depicted in each video were measured using an adapted version of the Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q; Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004). The questionnaire is made up of eleven statements which are divided into three subscales Closeness (4), Commitment (3) and Complementarity (4). The scale range is from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree). This scale measures the meta-perspective of the participant regarding the coach (i.e. how an individual believes the coach perceives the athletic relationship). Normally this questionnaire is completed by an athlete working with a coach regarding their own relationship. In this case the questionnaire was modified to gauge an inference about the coach's beliefs about the athletes depicted in the video. Three subscales were assessed- closeness, the coach's liking, trust and respect for the athlete (e.g., 'The coach likes the athlete'); commitment, the coach's dedication to the athlete and intent to continue working with them (e.g., 'The coach believes that the athlete's career is promising with him/her'); complementarity, the coach's co-operative behaviours, responsiveness and friendliness towards the athlete (e.g., 'The coach is ready to do his/her best'). For this sample, the inter-item reliability for closeness, commitment, and complementarity was 0.94, 0.57 and 0.94 respectively. Inter-item reliability was calculated by Cronbachs alpha and is considered of an acceptable level between the values of 0.70 and 0.95



(Tavakol and Dennick 2011). The inter-item reliability was low for the subscale of commitment.

*Perceived empathy.* Participants' perceptions of the empathy demonstrated by the coach towards the athlete depicted in each video were measured using an adapted version of Questionnaire of Cognitive and Affective Empathy (QCAE; Reniers *et al.* 2011).

Normally this scale is used to measure an individual's beliefs about their own affective and cognitive empathy abilities. In this case, the questionnaire was modified to reflect an inference about the coach depicted in the videos empathy ability. Two subscales were assessed. Perspective taking is a measure of cognitive empathy that captures how well an individual understands what others are thinking and feeling (e.g., 'The coach can easily tell if someone else wants to enter a conversation'). Proximal responsitivity is a measure of affective empathy that captures how an individual's emotions mirror those of others they interact with (e.g., 'The coach often gets emotionally involved with his/her athletes' problems'). The two subscales are made up of statements perspective taking (10) and proximal responsitivity (4). The scale range is from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). For this sample, the inter-item for the sample was, 0.93 and 0.89 respectively. Inter-item reliability was calculated by Cronbachs alpha and is considered of an acceptable level between the values of 0.70 and 0.95 (Tavakol and Dennick 2011).

*Gender perceptions.* Participants perceptions of their attitude towards the coach in the video were measured using an adapted version of The Attitudes of Athletes Towards Male and Female Coaches Questionnaire (AAMFC-Q; Weinberg, Reeves and Jackson 1984). The original questionnaire was made up of eleven questions. The participants respond to each question on a scale of one to eleven. One is used to represent "not at all" and eleven to represent "very much". The questionnaire normally has a paragraph

which gives information on a male or female coach, however in this study the paragraph has been removed and the participant's rate the coach based on the video. For this sample, the inter-item for the sample was, 0.80 and 0.77 for male and female versions respectively. Inter-item reliability was calculated by Cronbachs alpha and is considered of an acceptable level between the values of 0.70 and 0.95 (Tavakol and Dennick 2011).

#### 4.1.3 Procedures

The University's Research Ethics Committee granted full ethical approval before the study began. Participants were approached using a variety of means including telephone, letter and email (see Appendix 7) and were invited to take part in an investigation examining how female coaches with a masculine or feminine appearance interact with male and female athletes. Participant information sheets were given to all those who expressed an interest in participating in the study (see Appendix 8). All participants completed an informed consent form before progressing (see Appendix 9). Participants watched two videos on one occasion. Videos were presented to the participants in a random order. After viewing each video participants were asked to complete the questionnaires (CCS, CART-Q, QCAE and AAMFC-Q) (see Appendix 10) regarding the coach they had just watched.

#### 4.1.4 Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviations were calculated for each of the subscales. To establish if any of the dependent variables were significantly influenced by the masculine/feminine mix of the coach and athlete in each video, a two way repeated measures ANOVA consisting of two between-subjects factors (coach gender and athlete gender) was tested for each in turn. Effect sizes and paired samples T-test were used post hoc. Effect size

was calculated using Cohen's  $d = \frac{M1-M2}{SD}$  (Cohen 1988). An effect size of 0.2 is small, 0.5 is medium and 0.8 is large (Cohen 1988).

## *4.2 Results*

Male and female participant data was analysed together after an independent t-test revealed no significant difference. The means and standard deviations for each subscale are shown in Table 4, 5 and 6. An examination of the means shows that there are differences within each of the subscales. A common trend that is apparent is that the feminine coach with female athletes has been scored lower across all the subscales. Table 7 shows the effect sizes between each pairing of videos across all variables. To establish if any of the dependent variables were significantly influenced by the gender mix of the coach and athlete in each video, a two way repeated measures ANOVA consisting of two between-subjects factors (coach gender and athlete gender) was tested for each in turn.

*Table 4-Descriptive Statistics (Relationship Quality)*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Closeness</b>		
Feminine Coach/Female Athlete	3.92	1.55
Feminine Coach/Male Athlete	4.32	1.20
Masculine Coach/Female Athlete	4.69	1.32
Masculine Coach/Male Athlete	4.39	1.46
<b>Commitment</b>		
Feminine Coach/Female Athlete	3.82	1.53
Feminine Coach/Male Athlete	4.15	1.28
Masculine Coach/Female Athlete	4.41	1.32
Masculine Coach/Male Athlete	4.11	1.46
<b>Complementarity</b>		
Feminine Coach/Female Athlete	3.97	1.65
Feminine Coach/Male Athlete	4.31	1.37
Masculine Coach/Female Athlete	4.38	1.50
Masculine Coach/Male Athlete	4.50	1.51

*Table 5-Descriptive Statistics (Empathy and Attitude)*

	Mean	SD
<b>Affective Empathy</b>		
Feminine Coach/Female Athlete	2.90	0.97
Feminine Coach/Male Athlete	3.33	0.82
Masculine Coach/Female Athlete	3.22	0.82
Masculine Coach/Male Athlete	3.89	0.94
<b>Cognitive Empathy</b>		
Feminine Coach/Female Athlete	2.14	0.58
Feminine Coach/Male Athlete	2.26	0.55
Masculine Coach/Female Athlete	2.33	0.69
Masculine Coach/Male Athlete	2.40	0.87
<b>Attitude</b>		
Feminine Coach/Female Athlete	5.02	1.64
Feminine Coach/Male Athlete	5.27	1.62
Masculine Coach/Female Athlete	5.53	1.50
Masculine Coach/Male Athlete	5.53	2.03

*Table 6-Descriptive Statistics (Coaching Competency)*

	Mean	SD
<b>Motivation</b>		
Feminine Coach/Female Athlete	1.92	1.00
Feminine Coach/Male Athlete	2.25	0.83
Masculine Coach/Female Athlete	2.39	0.90
Masculine Coach/Male Athlete	2.16	1.06
<b>Strategy</b>		
Feminine Coach/Female Athlete	1.89	0.83
Feminine Coach/Male Athlete	2.15	0.81
Masculine Coach/Female Athlete	2.34	0.78
Masculine Coach/Male Athlete	2.27	0.95
<b>Technique</b>		
Feminine Coach/Female Athlete	2.12	0.92
Feminine Coach/Male Athlete	2.49	0.72
Masculine Coach/Female Athlete	2.64	0.88
Masculine Coach/Male Athlete	2.56	1.01
<b>Character building</b>		
Feminine Coach/Female Athlete	2.06	1.04
Feminine Coach/Male Athlete	2.59	1.13
Masculine Coach/Female Athlete	2.64	0.77
Masculine Coach/Male Athlete	2.55	1.00

Table 7-Effect size of comparisons between videos

	Closeness	Commitment	Complementarity	Affective Emp.	Cognitive Emp.	Attitude	Motivation	Strategy	Technique	Character Building
MF/MA & MF/FA	0.22	0.22	0.08	0.76*	0.01	0.00	0.23	0.08	0.08	0.10
MF/MA & FF/MA	0.05*	0.03	0.13	0.63	0.20	0.14	0.09*	0.14*	0.08	0.04*
MF/MA & FF/FA	0.31	0.19	0.34	0.76	0.36	0.30	0.23	0.43	0.46	0.48
MF/FA & FF/MA	0.29	0.20	0.05	0.13	0.11	0.17	0.16	0.24	0.19	0.05
MF/FA & FF/FA	0.53*	0.41	0.26	0.36	0.30	0.32	0.49*	0.56*	0.58	0.63*
FF/MA & FF/FA	0.29	0.23	0.22	0.48*	0.11	0.15	0.36	0.32	0.45	0.49

MF=Masculine female coach FF=Feminine female coach MA=Male Athlete  
FA=Female Athlete \*=significant comparison

*Relationship Quality.* For the variable closeness, the analysis revealed there was no significant main effect for Athlete Gender,  $F(1, 71) = 0.12, p=0.73$ , a significant main effect for Coach Gender bias,  $F(1, 71) = 4.81, p=0.03$ , no significant interaction effect between these two variables  $F(1, 71) = 2.16, p=0.15$ . For the variable commitment, the analysis revealed there was no significant main effect for Athlete Gender,  $F(1, 71) = 0.01, p=0.93$ , no significant main effect for Coach Gender bias,  $F(1, 71) = 3.10, p=0.09$ , no significant interaction effect between these two variables  $F(1, 71) = 1.00, p=0.32$ . For the variable complementarity, the analysis revealed there was no significant main effect for Athlete Gender  $F(1, 71) = 2.15, p=0.15$ , no significant main effect for Coach Gender bias,  $F(1, 71) = 0.49, p=0.49$ , no significant interaction effect between these two variables  $F(1, 71) = 0.90, p=0.48$ .

*Empathy.* For the variable Affective empathy, the analysis revealed there was a significant main effect for Athlete Gender,  $F(1, 71) = 9.53, p=0.003$ , no significant main effect for Coach Gender Bias,  $F(1, 71) = 2.99, p=0.08$ , and no significant interaction effect between these two variables  $F(1, 71) = 0.72, p=0.40$ . For the variable Cognitive empathy, the analysis revealed there was no significant main effect for Athlete Gender,  $F(1, 71) = 1.61, p=0.21$ , no significant main effect for Coach Gender bias,  $F(1, 71) = 0.11, p=0.74$ , no significant interaction effect between these two variables  $F(1, 71) = 1.39, p=0.24$ .

*Coaching Competency.* For the variable motivation, the analysis revealed there was no significant main effect for Athlete Gender  $F(1, 71) = 0.20, p=0.66$ , a significant main effect for Coach Gender bias,  $F(1, 71) = 6.37, p=0.01$ , no significant interaction effect between these two variables  $F(1, 71) = 9.6, p=0.33$ . For the variable strategy, the analysis revealed there was no significant main effect for Athlete Gender  $F(1, 71) = 1.54, p=0.22$ , a significant main effect for Coach Gender bias  $F(1, 71) = 4.17, p=0.05$ ,



no significant main effect between these two variables  $F(1, 71) = 2.51, p = 0.19$ . For the variable technique, the analysis revealed there was no significant main effect for Athlete Gender  $F(1, 71) = 2.57, p = 0.11$ , no significant main effect for Coach Gender bias  $F(1, 71) = 6.35, p = 0.14$ , no significant interaction effect between these two variables  $F(1, 71) = 2.43, p = 0.12$ . For the variable character, the analysis revealed there was no significant main effect for Athlete Gender  $F(1, 71) = 2.90, p = 0.09$ , a significant main effect for Coach Gender bias  $F(1, 71) = 5.60, p = 0.02$ , no significant interaction effect between these two variables  $F(1, 71) = 1.93, p = 0.17$ .

*Attitudes.* For the variable Coach Attitudes, the analysis revealed no significant main effect for Athlete Gender,  $F(1, 71) = 0.35, p = 0.56$ , no significant main effect for Coach Gender Bias,  $F(1, 71) = 1.32, p = 0.25$ , and no significant interaction effect between these two variables,  $F(1, 71) = 0.34, p = 0.56$ .

### 4.3 Discussion

The purpose of the study was to explore how the perceived masculinity or femininity of a female coach would affect how that coach and their relationship with their athletes were perceived by others. It was hypothesised that a masculinised coach would be perceived to be better at technical aspects of coaching whilst a feminised coach would be perceived to be better at the relationship aspect of coaching.

The results of the current study showed that in terms of coaching competency there was a significant main effect for coach gender bias across all of the subscales (motivation ( $p < 0.01$ ), character building ( $p < 0.02$ ) and strategy ( $p < 0.05$ )). For all of the subscales the masculinised coach working with female athletes was rated the highest (see Table 6). The results for relationship quality show a significant main effect for coach gender bias in the subscale of closeness with the masculinised coach being rated higher than the

feminised coach ( $p < 0.03$ ). In the subscale of complementarity a similar trend was observed, however this did not reach significance. The results in the commitment subscale differed as although the masculine coach was rated highest when working with female athletes, the masculine coach working with male athletes was rated significantly lower than the feminine coach working with male athletes (see Table 4). The results for empathy showed a significant main effect for athlete gender in the subscale of affective empathy, both the masculinised and feminised coaches being perceived to be more empathic working with male athletes than female athletes ( $p < 0.003$ ). The results in the subscale of cognitive empathy did not reach significance, however, the masculinised coach was viewed as being more empathetic than the feminised coach (see Table 5). Overall, the masculinised coach has generally been viewed more positively than the feminised coach. The masculinised coach was rated higher than the feminised coach across all of the subscales. While it was expected that by the coach being manipulated to appear masculine she would be associated more with agentic traits such as being independent and competitive and therefore be perceived more negatively in more feminine traits such as relationship quality and empathy. The results of this study suggest that the masculinised coach is viewed more favourably across both technical and relationship skill traits.

Sport and coaching tend to be associated with the ideal form of masculinity which emphasises power and competitiveness (Coakley and Donnelly 2003). Hardin and Greer (2009) found that students perceived most sports to be associated with males. This research demonstrates how sport has a closer association with masculinity than femininity. In a study looking at athlete's preferences it was found that good coaching tended to be associated with masculine traits (Sports Coach UK and Women in Sport and Fitness Foundation). This shows how masculinity can affect perceptions of

coaching and in line with these results shows how typically masculinity is preferred over femininity in sport.

A coach is placed in a position of leadership over athletes and leadership skills tend to be associated with masculinity. Offerman, Kennedy and Wirtz's (1994) identified sensitivity, dedication, tyranny, charisma, attractiveness, masculinity, intelligence and strength as important leadership traits. The results identify masculinity to be an important trait of a leader. This demonstrates the strong association between leadership and masculinity. Epitropaki and Martin (2004) identified four key leadership qualities sensitivity, intelligence, dedication and dynamism. While these are predominantly masculine traits, sensitivity has a greater association with femininity than masculinity (Connell 1995). This suggests that feminine traits may also be desirable in leadership positions. However, Lord, Foti and De Vader (1984) argued that some leadership traits are only considered to be essential traits in a certain context. Sport is often referred to as aligning with masculinity and reproducing dominant ideas of masculinity (Hatty 2000). Therefore it may be that the masculinised coach in this study benefitted from appearing more masculine due to the traits associated with sport and leadership roles stronger association with masculinity. This means that given the situation was sport based that the masculinised coach aligns better with the leadership and sport based scenario than the feminised female coach.

Due to the coach being manipulated to appear as masculine the perceived stereotypes of this individual will have been altered. For example, a masculine female is often perceived to behave in a different way to a feminine female such as aligning more with masculine stereotypes. In sport a stereotypical idea associated with female athletes and other participants is that they are more masculine than females not involved in sport (Krauer and Krane 2006). It can be argued masculinity is associated with women

involved in sport and therefore a more masculine female coach would be associated more with sport and in line with traditional perceptions of sport than would a feminine coach. It is suggested then that through the female coach being manipulated to appear as feminine that the perceived stereotypes of this individual have been altered. In sport masculine characteristics are seen as desirable, yet females tend to be discouraged from showing these characteristics. However, if a female is overly stereotypically feminine in sport she tends to be sexualised, demeaned and undervalued (Festle 1996). The feminised coach in the videos has potentially been viewed as too feminine for the sports based scenario and this may have led to participants demeaning and devaluing her coaching despite the coaching in both videos being standardised. This highlights the importance of female coach's appearances and perhaps the need to 'fit in' with the expectations of the sport context.

The results of coaching competency show that in the subscales of strategy and technique the masculinised coach is perceived better than the feminised coach, however, the results in the motivation and character building subscales differ as the masculine coach with male athlete is rated lower than the feminine coach with male athlete (See Table 6). This may be due to the difference in coaching skill set character building and motivation can be perceived as being concerned with emotions whilst strategy and technique are perceived as being concerned with practical coaching skills (Myers *et al.* 2006). The masculinised coach was expected to be rated higher than the feminised female coach in terms of practical coaching skills as by being manipulated to display a more masculine appearance it was expected that the coach would align more with expectations of the sport environment and be perceived as being more competent. In sports coaching, male coaches tend to be preferred over female coaches (Kamphoff 2010). This is because male coaches are viewed as more competent and experienced

than female coaches. For example, Manley *et al.* (2010) found that in terms of coaching competency in relation to game-strategy and technique female coaches are rated as less competent than the male coaches. Additionally, in research it has been shown that the appearances of women can have an effect on their perceived levels of competence; Wooky, Graves and Butler (2009) found that a women who dressed professionally in a business jacket was thought of as more competent than a women who dressed in a low-buttoned blouse. This highlights that women are perceived to be more competent when wearing clothing associated with masculinity opposed to femininity. This suggests that a female coach who is seen as more masculine would be perceived more favourable than a female coach who is seen as more feminine as they will be closer to the masculine ideal of sport.

The results of relationship quality show that in the subscale of closeness and complementarity the masculinised coach was rated higher than the feminised coach (see Table 4). The results in the commitment subscale differed with the masculinised coach rated higher only when working with the female athletes (see Table 4). Rudman *et al.* (2011) and Catalyst (2010) found that women in leadership positions who exhibit behaviours and characteristics associated with men tend to be viewed as less likable. This means that in the video, it was expected that the masculinised coach when working with the athletes would have been perceived to be less likable to the athletes, as by appearing to be more masculine the coach would be perceived to align more with agentic traits than communal traits so therefore, would be viewed less positively in terms of closeness. However, what was found was the masculinised coach was actually rated higher than the feminised coach. Therefore, the results were contrary to what was expected. The masculine coach may have been perceived as having better relationship qualities than the feminine coach due to the sport based scenario. The subscales of

closeness and complementarity focus on sport specific interactions which tend to be associated with agentic traits. Therefore, the masculinised coach would have align more with the traits necessary to be rated higher in these subscales. The results showed that for the commitment subscale, both masculinised and feminised coaches were perceived to be more committed to continuing a relationship when the athlete's gender is the opposite to the manipulation of their masculinity or femininity.

The perceptions of affective empathy between the coach and athlete in the present study show both coaches have been viewed as being more empathic with male athletes than female athletes (see Table 5). The perceptions of cognitive empathy between the coach and athletes in the present study show that the masculinised coach has been viewed as being more empathic than the feminised coach. A stereotypical characteristic of a woman is that they are expected to be more empathic than men because women are perceived to possess communal behaviours such as being caring and understanding (Eagly and Woods 1991). Therefore, it was expected that the masculinised female coach would be viewed to be less empathic due to her aligning more with masculine characteristics than the feminised coach. The masculinised and feminised coach being perceived as most empathic with the male athlete was unexpected, as it was predicted the coaches would be perceived to be more empathic with the female athletes. This is because research suggests that females are more empathic than males (Toussaint and Web 2005 Mestre *et al.* 2009). Therefore, it was expected that with females working together that this would be perceived as the best empathetic interaction. Staats, Long, Manulik and Kelley (2006) found that women were more empathetic when interacting with another woman than a man. However, the study also found that when men interact with the opposite gender they have a higher score of empathy than women. This means it is important to consider the masculinity/femininity of all participants when exploring

how an individual is perceived as the results of this study suggest that the athletes' gender has been focused on when creating perceptions of the coaches' empathy.

The perceptions of cognitive empathy between the coach and athlete in the present study show that the masculine coach has been viewed as being more empathetic than the feminine coach (see Table 5). It is commonly believed that empathy is a characteristic associated with females (Toussaint and Wed 2005). In research females have been found to be more empathic than males (Toussaint and Web 2005; Mestre *et al.* 2009). Therefore, it was expected that the masculine female coach would be viewed to be less empathic due to her aligning more with masculine characteristics than the feminine coach. Krauer and Krane (2006) studied stereotypes of women in sport, the study reported that one of the stereotypical ideas associated with woman athletes was masculinity. The result of this study shows the association between women in sport and masculinity.

The perceptions of attitudes towards coaches in the present study show that the masculinised coach has been viewed more positively than the feminised coach. The masculinised coach was scored the same working with the male and female athletes. Typically, female coaches tend to be perceived negatively by male athletes, therefore, it was expected that the coach would be scored lower when working with the male athletes than when working with the female athletes. Blom *et al.* (2011), Kamphoff, Armentrout and Driska (2010) and Norman (2010) explained the difficulties female coaches face trying to prove their competence to male athletes. The male athletes doubting the competence of female coaches shows that they hold negative attitudes towards them. Norman (2010, 2011) reported that female coaches often have their skills underestimated and are often not respected when occupying senior coaching positions. This is further evidence which conflicts with the results of the present study.

Medwechuk and Crossman (1994) studied competitive swimmers attitudes towards male and female coaches. The results of the study showed that the athletes rated a coach the same gender as them higher. However, in the present study the masculinised coach was rated the same when working with the male and female athletes. Female coaches are normally rated lower by male athletes (Manley *et al.* 2010). The masculinised coach aligned more closely with the stereotypical idea that sport is masculine. The masculinised coach in this study was also seen as more competent. In previous research female coaches were rated lower than male coaches, this maybe because the male coaches were perceived as more masculine. Habif, Van Raalte and Cornelius (2001) studied the attitudes of Basketball and Volleyball athletes towards male and female coaches. The results of the study were that the male and female Basketball and Volleyball athletes didn't have negative attitudes towards female coaches. This result helps to explain the results in the current study as the masculinised coach has been rated the same when working with male and female athletes.

The feminised coach was rated lower when working with the female athletes than male athletes. Magnusen and Rhea (2009) studied the attitudes of Division One American College male and female athletes towards a hypothetical strength and conditioning coach, the results conflict with the findings in this study as the male athletes displayed negative attitudes towards the hypothetical female coach. This shows that male athletes tend to display negative attitudes towards female coaches. Therefore, it would be expected that the feminised coach would be rated lower when working with the male athletes than female athletes. Blom *et al.* (2011), Kamphoff, Armentrout and Driska (2010) and Norman (2010) showed the difficulties female coaches face trying to prove their competence to male athletes. The male athletes doubting the competence of female coaches shows that they hold negative attitudes towards them. Medwechuk and



Crossman (1994) studied competitive swimmers attitudes towards male and female coaches. The results of the study showed that the athletes rated a coach with the same gender as them more positively. However, in the present study the feminised coach was rated lower when working with female athletes. Habif, Van Raalte and Cornelius (2001) studied the attitudes of Basketball and Volleyball athletes towards male and female coaches and showed that neither gender showed more negative didn't have negative attitudes This can help to explain the results in the current study.

The videos used in the study showed a sport-neutral scenario. The videos showed no references to a particular sport or type of sport. This was to control the variable, however this means that the potential differences based on sport type are not seen in this study. Different sports have a level of associated masculinity or femininity influenced by the gender of those who traditionally participate in those sports as well as the actual activities involved in the sports (Koivula, 2001). For example, contact sports such as rugby or combat sports tend to be traditionally seen as masculine while artistic sports such as gymnastics are often seen as feminine (Hardin and Greer 2009). There may be a potential interaction of the gender of the coach and athletes, with the perceived gender association of the sport, that influences how a coach and the quality of their relationship with an athlete are perceived. It may be where the coach gender aligns with that of the sport that they are perceived more favourable. For example, in combat or contact sports, traditionally seen as masculine sport, it may be that a coach is perceived more positively when they are assertive and directive. As these are masculine traits, the coach is likely to be seen more favourable if they align with their traditional gender roles, i.e., if the coach is also male (Heilman *et al.* 2004). It would be useful for future research to investigate how sport-type, particularly highly masculine and feminine sports, influence how coaches are perceived. It is important to note, that

despite the videos being sport neutral, it is likely that participants subconsciously projected a sport onto the videos based on their own sport participation and that this may have influenced their perceptions.

The results of this study show how the perceived masculinity/femininity of a female coach has an effect on their perceived coaching competency, relationship quality and empathy with athletes. In this study the actor in all four videos was the same with dialogue and scenarios standardised and footage of the athletes reused between coaches, this suggests that differences in reported perceptions were most likely influenced by the clothing and stance of the coach. In terms of results, this study demonstrates how the perceptions towards a female coach are more positive when displaying a stereotypically masculine appearance.

In summary, the findings of the present study highlight that the perceived masculinity/femininity of a female coach has an effect on how they are perceived. The results highlight that female coaches are perceived more favourably when they display a more masculine appearance as opposed to a feminine appearance when they are rated in terms of coaching competency, relationship quality and empathy with athletes.

However, the findings also highlight the influence of the gender of the athletes being coached, and the importance of the interaction of the overall context (coach gender, athlete gender, scenario and environment) to the forming of perceptions regarding the observed coach. This has implications for coaching practice, education and evaluation as a coaches perceived masculinity/femininity and their context can result in more or less favorable assessments, in particular female coaches may be perceived more favorably when wearing stereotypically masculine clothing. The discussion highlights the probable influence of the raters projecting their own biases and preconceptions onto the videos (e.g., imagining it is a particular sport). Future research needs to address the

awareness of female coaches to how they are perceived and their experiences in sports coaching, and to explore their experiences across different sports, performance levels and contexts in order to determine the effect their gender and perceptions of their gender has on their experience and progression in sports coaching.

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE COACHES IN SPORTS COACHING**

### *5.0 Introduction*

The number of women in leadership positions in sport is low worldwide (International Working Group for Women in Sport 2012). In the UK 30% of all coaches are women, however only 17% of qualified coaches are women. Women occupy 10% of British coaching positions (Sport Coach UK 2015). These statistics show that female coaches are underrepresented in sport. Acosta and Carpenter (2012) place an importance on females being in influential positions within sport especially, as coaches. However, the numbers of women involved in influential positions in sport and coaching remains to be lower than males (Acosta and Carpenter 2012). This is despite continued increases in women participating in sport; currently in the UK women are accountable for 44% of all sport participation (Sport Coach UK 2015). Women's increasing participating in sport is encouraging, however, despite this few are entering in to coaching, due to experiencing gender related barriers in sports related to the expectations of their social role (Messner 2009).

Social Role Theory explores expectations people have of both genders and the effect of these expectations on people (Wharton 2012). Men and women conform to their expected roles by displaying certain behaviours for example, men being independent, assertive and competitive and women being sociable, unselfish and open (Eagly and Wood 1991). Traditionally, women were assigned the role of homemaker, whereas men were expected to be the economic providers (Owen Blakemore, Barenboim and Liben 2009). The role of women in society has changed over time and there has been an increase in women working (Scott, Dex and Joshi 2008). Despite the increases in

women working in leadership positions they still tend to align with masculinity. Skelly and Johnson (2011) found that the expectations of leadership positions are having knowledge in the field of work, interpersonal skills and masculinity. It is becoming more common for males and females to do work, which is perceived to be incongruent with their traditional social role. However, when a women is in a leadership position she may be perceived as less favourable as her position conflicts with her traditional social role and the notion of femininity (Heilman *et al.* 2004). Eagly (2002) found that male leaders were perceived more favourably than female leaders. However, Baker (2014) found that women have skills which are favourable to occupying leadership positions, although despite this less women are attaining these positions than men. The results of this research in relation to women occupying leadership positions are mirrored in sports coaching.

In sport, there is an apparent imbalance between males and females (Shaw and Slack 2002). The association between masculinity and sport is evident in sports coaching. Coaching tends to be viewed as a job for men (Kamphoff 2010) and female coaches feel that elite coaches are always presumed to be male (Norman 2010). In comparison to their male counterparts female coaches are assumed to have a lower coaching competency (Kilty 2006). Athletes tend to show a preference towards a male coach and think that they are more competent than a female coach (Manley *et al.* 2010). This assumption affects female coaches in other aspects of coaching. Norman (2010) found that female coaches felt that in order to gain male athletes respect they had to make an additional effort. Female coaches also report that they have difficulty constructing professional relationships with their athletes, but more so with male coaches (Kamphoff 2010). Blom *et al.* (2011) identified that the majority of coaches felt they had experienced gender

discrimination in their employment. This shows how female coaches face discrimination in their role due to their gender.

The difficulties faced in sport tend to stem from the strong association of sport and leadership positions with masculinity. Female coaches have reported gender related barriers in sports coaching such as lack of support, lack of respect from athletes and feeling unwelcome (LaVoi and Dutove 2012). Messner noted ‘women coaches just aren’t competing on a level playing field with the men’ (2009, p52.).

The aim of this study is to explore the experiences of female coaches in sport. The objectives were to gain a further understanding of how gender has an effect on the experiences of female sports coaches and how this impacts them within their roles.

### *5.1 Method*

Seven coaches were interviewed, four coaches were involved in team sports and three were involved with individual sports. A criterion sampling method was used for recruitment of participants therefore, participants had to meet the requirements of the predetermined criteria (Creswell 2015). The criteria for being selected were had to be a minimum of 18 years of age, female coach and actively involved in coaching any sport. The coaches had been involved in coaching for an average of 8.5 years (SD=4.27).

The study was approved by the University’s research and ethics committee before potential participants were contacted. Potential participants were approached by the first named researcher by email and invited to participate in the study (see Appendix 11). Those that expressed an interest in becoming involved were provided with a participant information sheet to take away and read (see Appendix 12). Before taking part in the study participants received a verbal explanation of the aims and background of the study, and were asked if they had any questions. Participants were then asked to

*Table 8-Coaches Profiles*

	Sport	Qualification	Experience	Position
Ann	Gymnastics	UKCC Level 2	5	Group lead coach
Carla	Football	UEFA B	16	Head coach
Mary	Football	Level 3	14	Head coach
Denise	Skiing	Landis 3	4	Group lead coach
Betty	Badminton	UKCC Level 1	6	Assistant coach
	Football	Youth 2		
Bella	Football	SFA 2	8	Assistant coach
	Basketball	n/a		Lead Coach
Molly	Trampoline Gymnastics	UKCC Level 3	7	Head Coach

complete voluntary informed consent forms and interviews were arranged for a mutually convenient time (see Appendix 13). The interviews took place in a meeting room at Abertay University. Interviews lasted between 35 and 90 minutes and were all fully audio-recorded. These were then transcribed verbatim.

An interview schedule was used to prompt participants' responses about their reflections on their coaching experiences (see Appendix 14). Each interview consisted of three parts, the first was a brief introduction to reiterate the conditions of their informed consent and participation, gather background information and to establish rapport with the participants. The second part of the interview consisted of a series of open-ended questions, which were asked in the same sequence and wording, with probes used as required. Finally, each interview concluded by asking participants whether there were any further issues that they wished to add and a debriefing.

Data was analysed thematically. This method identifies, analyses, interprets and reports patterns within data. It structures and defines data using rich detail (Braun and Clarke 2006). The data was analysed considering the guidance of Braun and Clarke (2006). The data was read numerous times in order to become familiar with the data. Once familiarity with the coaches' data had been achieved the data was coded. These codes were then collated and listed for the entire data set; data which had been assigned the same code was then grouped together. The coded data was then grouped together into identifiable themes whilst trying to identify any potential overarching themes. The data contained within each theme was then reviewed in order to check the quotes fitted within the theme. The removal of data from themes lead to the creation of new themes or the data being removed from the analysis. Themes were then checked to see if they made sense within the data set. The check included checking that the themes identified had individual differences and were able to form a story. Themes were then refined and



defined in the writing process, these continued to be refined throughout the writing process with the emergence of new ideas. Rich data was used to support the themes and were set within an analytic tale.

In qualitative research trustworthiness is established by credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility is concerned with the degree to which the findings can be believed to be authentic. Transferability is the ability to apply the findings to another context. Dependability is the ability to replicate the results. Confirmability is the demonstration that the findings were caused by the respondents and not the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) outline numerous approaches to establishing trustworthiness such as prolonged engagement, external audits and member checks. Creswell (1998) suggested that at least two procedures should be used to ensure trustworthiness. The procedures used in this study were prolonged engagement, triangulation and thick description. The first researcher and supervisor involved themselves in prolonged engagement with the interview transcripts, in order to become familiar with the participants experiences. The three researchers had meetings to develop and identify themes in the interview transcripts, this process is called triangulation. The themes were then developed and adapted before being finalised over the course of several meetings. In the study the results have been presented by rich and thick descriptions.

## *5.2 Discussion of Findings*

Coaches' experiences of sport were affected by their traditional social roles. These social roles remain gendered and have an effect on perceptions of suitability to coaching. Sports coaching tends to be associated with the hegemonic masculinity which emphasises power and competitiveness (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Therefore sport tends to align itself more naturally with society's ideas of masculine behaviours.

All coaches had experienced occasions where they felt their presence in sport in a coaching capacity was not accepted, this stems from their traditional social roles and sports association with masculinity. The perception that sport is more strongly associated with males creates problems for female coaches in relation to developing relationships with athletes and gaining respect. The coaches felt it was harder for them to progress to higher positions in coaching than male coaches. Female coaches struggle to progress in coaching based on perceptions which are associated with traditional notions of femininity. These perceptions cause them to be perceived by athletes and coaches to be lacking the essential characteristics in relation to leadership and sport such as masculinity. The majority of coaches discussed problems gaining respect and suggested that male coaches gain automatic respect from athletes. The perceptions associated with female coaches, due to their gender, has an impact on their careers and relationship with athletes. Female coaches often referred to their ability to care for athletes in relation to male coaches. Their self-perception of a higher level of care towards athletes stems from their traditional social role as caregivers (Eagly 1987). This current research suggests that perceptions held towards women being caring are beneficial to them in sports coaching.

#### 5.2.1 Popular gendered ideas about sport

Social role theory explains the roles that each gender occupies in society and its effects on behaviour (Eagly and Wood 1991). Men are expected to exhibit agency behaviours such as being independent, assertive, competitive, ambitious and aggressive. Women are expected to exhibit communal behaviours such as being sociable, unselfish and open about their feelings (Eagly 2009). Therefore, sport tends to align itself more naturally with society's ideas of masculine behaviours. It is a social institution where hegemonic masculinity is reproduced and reaffirmed (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

Hegemonic masculinity refers to practices which relate to the promotion of men in social positions and women's subordination (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Hatty (2000) supports the notion that sport aligns and reproduces dominant ideas of masculinity. Therefore, women's participation in sport as athletes or coaches is often viewed as being unacceptable. The findings illustrate that these ideas are learned at an early age.

*My two year old nephew said to me I wasn't allowed to play with a ball. I am thinking your two. How do you know that and where has that come from? It hasn't come from his parents, but he perceived me having a ball and being female as wrong, so socially things need to change.*

Carla (Football)

This also demonstrates that the social roles of males and females are passed onto future generations (Eagly 1987). The social roles of men and women are projected to younger generations due to socialisation processes where men and women learn different skills and behaviours. Children learn how to behave in gendered ways through the influences of education, media and cultural products. Authority figures like teachers and parents for example, encourage children to learn certain skills and to behave in particular ways depending on their gender (Anderson and Taylor 2007). Cultural products produced for children such as toys for example, Action Man for boys and Barbie for girls influences the behaviours and beliefs of children in relation to gender (Francis 2010). Toys help to create a gendered identity (Kramer 2005). The coaches all state they are aware of some individual's negative perceptions towards female involvement in sports participation.

*I think it's to do with the culture that females don't play sport and it's all about men's football and men's sports. That when females come into coaching or into these positions people are a little bit more dubious about how good can they be.*  
Carla (Football)

Traditionally women's involvement in sport was restricted to sports which focused on an aesthetic nature such as gymnastics and dance, however, women have in time have become involved in sports which are perceived to be more masculine in nature, such as

Football and Rugby (Cashmore and Cashmore 2010). The increased numbers of women participating in sports with masculine associations would suggest that the concept of appropriate female behaviours is being re-defined (Hargreaves 1994). Women in the UK are now accountable for 44% of all sport participation however increases in women's participation in sport is not mirrored in sports coaching as they only account for 17% of qualified coaches (Sport Coach UK 2015). The majority of the coaches refer to observable differences in individuals perceptions between sports.

*If people ask me what I do, I say I'm a gymnastics coach and people say that's really cool but if I was to say I was a football coach they would be like ohhh. I think it's just based on everyone's opinions. I think everyone just thinks of football and thinks that's for boys and gymnastics is for women. I think it's all based on everyone's perceptions of the traditional gender of the sport.*

Ann (Gymnastics)

This statement demonstrates how women's participation in sport is perceived positively or negatively depending on the sport they coach. Stirling and Schulz (2011) studied women's experiences of football and found as they aged it became less socially acceptable for them to participate in football, due to the masculine nature of the sport. Stirling and Schulz (2011) shows that society typically still views traditionally masculine sports as being inappropriate for women. The behaviours which are deemed acceptable for men and women stem from social role theory. Sport tends to align more with the desirable behaviours for men than women particularly in masculine sports. Sport tends to showcase masculine behaviours such as aggression, competitiveness and their physicality. However, women are still expected to display a traditional form of femininity in sport (Coakley 2006). Therefore, the expectancies of women in sport align better with traditionally feminine sports which focus on aesthetic elements. Coaches involved with sports which are perceived to be masculine discuss encountering disbelief. This is due to their gender being perceived as incongruent to the sport. The

coaches state that they are perceived to have a lower performance ability than male coaches.

Sports close association with masculinity affects women's participation in sport.

Women are often seen as an intruder in particular sports which are deemed to be masculine (Messner 2009). Women are often seen as intruders when they participate in masculine sports, this is mirrored in sports coaching. This research found that assumptions are made about female coaches which both help and hinder them working in the role of coach. The majority of coaches in particular those involved in masculine sports cite that there are numerous perceptions which are held about them.

*I think the majority [athletes] does I would say probably think they are soft not knowledgeable not confident. I think it's changing slowly but it's a big sport [football] and its male dominated and it has been for years but with the likes of Shelley Kerr getting the job at Stirling, hopefully that will change the perceptions, if she does well fingers crossed.*

Denise (Football)

Kamphoff (2010) argues that women tend to be perceived as less able to coach than men. These perceptions are rooted in hegemonic masculinity where men are viewed as superior in some aspects of sport in comparison to women. However, despite these commonly held beliefs the coaches interviewed believed that their sports were changing. Shaw and Slack (2002) studied English National Governing bodies they found that masculinity was promoted throughout sport through the language, policies and practices. They did however suggest that change was possible. The coaches often referred to the recent appointments of females in professional sport. In 2014 Shelley Kerr became the first female manager in Scottish Senior Football (BBC 2014) and Andy Murray appointed Amelie Mauresmo as his coach in 2014 (Guardian 2014). These instances show that a minority of women coaches' are beginning to gain top coaching positions in male sports. The computer game FIFA 2016 has announced that

they will include female football teams in the game for the first time ever (FIFA 2016).

These progressive events show that changes are occurring, but the traditional notions of masculinity still remain.

Female coaches tend to be viewed as less capable than male coaches, this makes it harder for female coaches in sport. The perceptions related to a coach's competence tend to be created based on their gender alone, however the physical appearance of individual coaches also has an effect on how they are perceived. Lubker, Watson, Viesk and Geer (2005) states that certain characteristics are more likely to affect athletes' perceptions of a coach. The majority of the coaches mention that perceptions based on physical characteristics are used to judge coaches suitability to the sport or their competency.

*If I'm speaking to someone and they ask what sport I play and I say basketball they look at me like really you play basketball. Are you sure? Do you not need to be tall to play basketball or male to play basketball? The stereotypes in sport are hard to break down.*

Bella (Basketball)

This is due to the stereotypical characteristics associated with basketball players. Bella felt that the stereotypical perception of a Basketball player is that they are tall and male. Carter, Ackland, Kerr and Stapff (2010) studied the body proportions of 168 female World Championship basketball players the results indicate that the mean of the players' height (1.80m) is above the average height (1.61m). This helps to create the stereotypical perception that to play Basketball you must be tall. Bella doesn't meet the stereotypical physical appearance based criteria within her sport which causes her involvement to be criticised. In the present study coaches stated that perceptions were based on physical characteristics of a coach in terms of their similarity to their sport.

*I know a lot of it is based on what people look like. In the past some of the female coaches have put on weight and because the ideal gymnast is of a child's body or someone who is quite small to have someone who is a size 18/20 who has been said to waddle round the hall. How can they possibly get on a trampoline and coach children?*

Molly (Gymnastics)

Manley *et al.* (2008) identified that athlete's use physique and body type to make initial impressions of coaches. Females tend to be at a greater risk of weight discrimination than males (Puhl, Andreyeva and Brownell 2008). This is partly due to the importance that is placed on females being thin in society (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, Quinn and Zoino 2006). Females who don't meet the ideal criteria of thinness tend to be negatively perceived (Brochu and Morrison 2007). The expectations of society in regards to thinness mirror the expectations of gymnastics and due to this female coaches who are overweight tend to be viewed negatively. This suggests that coaches are expected to demonstrate physiques in line with the expectations of their sport. The physique expected in a sport, however may conflict with the expectations of society (Ross and Shinenew 2008).

#### 5.2.2 Coaching as work: Gender barriers

Respect from athletes and colleagues is an essential component in sports coaching (Markula and Martin 2007). Female coaches' report feeling that they had to work harder than male coaches to gain respect with athletes (Norman 2013). The coaches highlighted that they find it harder to gain respect than male coaches.

*I feel females need to work 10 times more for athletes, coaches and officials to prove you can coach and work in the sport at any kind of level.*

Carla (Football)

Female coaches occupy a dual role as a women and as a leader, yet both these roles have conflicting factors. Eagly and Karau (2002) suggest that the biases towards

women in leadership roles are caused by leadership characteristics being more consistent with the traditional agentic social roles of men. Women in leadership roles are less likely to be respected due to them not being perceived to have the necessary stereotypical characteristics to be a leader such as not being able to take charge (Eagly 2007). An additional barrier for female coaches is they also work within a sporting environment, sport is a social institution that closely aligns with masculinity (Hatty 2000). Female coaches tend to struggle to gain respect more with male athletes than female athletes. This may be due to the greater role incongruity between the coach in the leadership role and the male athlete in a role of submission. For example, Denise explains:

*I think male adults obviously they do everything I say but they do it with a pinch of salt kind of thing. Here is this girl she's 18 and I was telling these 30/40 year old men you have to do this. Ha ha this 18 year old girl is telling me what to do. But they still did it but with that wee bit of pinch of salt.*

Denise (Skiing)

Blom *et al.* (2011) reports similar experiences, that female coaches felt that by being in their role as a coach they were continually tested by their male athletes, so they constantly had to display a strong persona and that they were not respected initially when working with athletes, however over time it improved. Similarly, Kamphoff, Armentrout and Driska (2010) studied women's experiences as head coaches in Division I collegiate men's track and field, cross country, tennis, squash, golf, rowing, swimming and diving. The majority of coaches stated they had difficulty gaining respect from athletes, coaches and parents. Norman (2010) studied experienced elite female British coaches they felt that with male athletes it was always a struggle to gain respect. The research demonstrates how female coaches struggle to gain respect in their role with male athletes.



Female coaches in general appear to struggle to gain respect. However, coaches without experience of the sport are suggested to find it harder.

*We have a lot of female coaches in the game and if they haven't played I feel they don't get as much respect.*

Carla (Football)

Female coaches struggle to be accepted in their role by male athletes. This may be related to stereotypical ideas associated with traditional gender roles, leadership roles and sport which are present when a female coach coaches male athletes.

Yiamouyiannis (2008) found that a female coach working with male athletes seems to be the least accepted coaching scenario. This could be potentially explained by the role incongruity between female coaches in a position of leadership coaching male athletes. In instances where female coaches are in a position of leadership over a male athlete the incongruence of their role is more pronounced. Traditional gender stereotypes and leadership stereotypes perceive men to be more suited to positions of leadership (Powell, Butterfield and Parent 2002). A female in a coaching position demonstrates a high degree of mismatch between her gender role and job role.

This study found female coaches struggle to gain respect and this helps to hinder their progression in sports coaching. The female coaches all suggest that males have better progression prospects in sports coaching. In terms of sports coaching, this may be caused by the role incongruity which female coaches face whilst in coaching positions. Sport and leadership position aligning predominantly with men has an impact on the progression of women coaches. The coaches also mention that the lower levels of coaching are mainly occupied by female coaches whereas higher positions are mainly male dominated.

*For younger coaches like volunteers, it seems to be like females but then when you look up the rankings at like the GB coaches or Scottish squad coaches, there's a lot of men involved with Gymnastics in the higher up ranks.*

Ann (Gymnastics)

Sports Coach UK (2002) have noticed that large numbers of women start coaching, however few ever progress. This finding is supported by research that shows females struggle to gain promotions. Lyness and Heilman (2006) found that promotions were more strongly associated with performance and females who gained promotion had to receive higher work related performance scores than promoted males. Thus, in terms of general work related promotions that male candidates are often preferred over female candidates. In sport female coaches face difficulties trying to progress to higher coaching positions (Kerr and Marshall 2007). Kerr and Marshall also suggest that in terms of women's progression in the work place that sport remains behind other careers. Norman's (2010) study on the experiences of female coaches supports Lyness and Heilman's study highlighting that the coaching ability of female coaches is often undervalued and that they tend to be discounted for promotion. When female coaches, like Mary talk of progression, they often feel that their gender is a barrier to gaining promotion.

*So there have been instances throughout where I have gone for a job and probably got the same qualifications as the males, but I have never got it because it's a male dominated sport and it's just a case of still chipping away and trying to get in there once I get in it will be fine.*

Mary (Football)

Sheridan and Milgate (2003) suggest that although more women are working the number of women occupying management positions is still low. Reade, Rodgers and Norman (2009) found that a large number of female coaches work in coaching jobs that are part-time or voluntary and that they are significantly less likely than male coaches to

have a full time job in sports coaching. Female coaches feel that due to the high competition for jobs this means that it is less likely for females to secure these positions (Shaw and Allen 2009). Kamphoff (2008) found that coaches believe managers perceive female coaches to be less competent than male coaches and find them to be disinclined to hire female coaches. The perception that females lack the necessary stereotypical characteristics to be a leader such as masculinity and strength hinders their progression in leadership positions in particular sports coaching. However, in line with a females' traditional social role they are perceived to have characteristics such as being more caring and nurturing than males (Hardman, Bailey and Lord 2015). These preconceived perceptions see female coaches being favoured for coaching positions that involve working with children (Messner 2009). Although female coaches are being perceived as having an advantage over male coaches in terms of being nurturing and caring these perceptions present as a barrier to female coaches looking to progress through the ranks of coaching.

Female coaches feel they are constantly placed under pressure whilst coaching by fellow coaches, officials and parents (Messner 2009). The female coaches involved in more traditionally masculine sports mention a pressure related to others waiting on them to fail. This is partially related to female coaches being viewed as less competent than male coaches and due to the greater role incongruity between them and their sport.

*Coaching courses there will be like 25 men and you and you're the one everyone will be staring at. The one that everyone is wondering is she going to be good, is she going to fall on her face here so I think the pressures that you are put under there are quite hard. I think the other coaches and participants put pressure on you, you feel like you are being stared at all the time. Waiting on you to fail, well that is what it feels like.*

Carla (Football)

Yiamouyiannis (2008) found that in coaching positions women have to demonstrate they are able to coach whereas men are assumed to be able to coach. In management jobs, females also tend to be perceived as less competent than males because they lack the characteristics which are deemed essential in this role (Eagly and Karau 2002). In terms of coaching, female coaches have to contend with the associated masculinity of leadership roles and sport. Therefore, a female coach demonstrates a high degree of mismatch between their gender role and job role. In instances when there is a high degree of mismatch between gender role and job role negative attitudes tend to be held towards these individuals. Manley *et al.* (2010) further demonstrates how female coaches tend to be viewed as being less competent than male coaches in relation to technique and strategy. The results of Manley *et al.* (2010) is supported by Heilman and Okimoto (2008), Hoyt (2012) and Lyness and Heilman (2006) who show that negative attitudes are shown towards females in roles that are conflicting with traditional gender roles of females.

### *5.3 Gendered Experiences of Coaching*

#### 5.3.0 Male dominated environments

The dominance of masculinity in sport makes it difficult for female coaches to develop relationships with male coaches. Alvesson and Due Billing (1997) suggest that in traditionally masculine dominated settings women are viewed as trespassers, this leads female coaches to be treated with enmity from male coaches. The female coaches in this study mention that they often face difficulty working with male coaches, which arises from feelings of exclusion and gender based discrimination. This result is in keeping with past research which shows that the majority of women involved in sport jobs have experienced or witnessed harassment based on their gender (McKay, 1999).

*A couple of them would have a wee bit of a cheeky joke, they would say you're a woman you don't know anything it was probably just a bit of banter, but sometimes I think it's a bit inappropriate because if the kids hear it they may doubt my coaching skills.*

Betty (Football/Badminton)

Coaching is a profession which tends to be viewed as male dominated due to the close association of sport and masculine traits (Messner 2009). This leads to female coaches being viewed as a minority group who through their assigned gender roles don't conform to the expected masculine traits of sport. Research suggests that to be a good coach, that individuals must be male (Kamphoff 2010). In sport research female coaches have reported experiences of being teased by mainly male colleagues (Norman 2011). It is believed this type of teasing stems from the need to maintain traditional gender roles (Berdahl 2007). The strong links between sport and masculinity mean that women working within sport are seen as a threat to the maintenance of men's masculinity (Chamberlin *et al.* 2008). Kerr (2009) found that the working environment of female coaches affected the experiences of harassment and bullying. Lopez, Hodson and Roscigno (2005) found that harassment occurs more often in jobs which emphasise physical qualities. The female coaches in this study who coached in a mainly male environment all referred to suffering from exclusion from their fellow male coaches.

*They do treat you a wee bit differently until they get to know you so it's not like when a guy comes in, they would just be normal straight away or they would start playing football whereas I would be happy to play football and kick a ball about with them. They just think she's a girl she doesn't play football.*

Bella (Basketball/Football)

The results of this study supports previous research. Allen and Shaw (2009) found that female coaches often feel excluded from their coaching peers. In particular female coaches often report feeling excluded by male colleagues and feeling unwelcome

(Messner 2009). Kamphoff, Armentrout and Driska (2010) found that some female coaches had a greater struggle developing relationships with male coaches than their male athletes. A commonly reported barrier by female coaches is the 'Old Boys Club' (Kerr and Marshall 2007). The 'Old Boys Club' refers to an informal network of men who work together to keep job positions and money within it members. This appears to be particularly evident in sports with a close association to masculinity. Roffey (2001) found that female coaches suggest that the 'Old Boys Club' is a barrier to their involvement in sport. A group of the female coaches state that this helps to maintain the exclusion of female coaches in sport.

Coaches involved in masculine sports reported competitiveness between female coaches. West and Brackenridge (1990) suggested that a network for female coaches didn't exist. However, in terms of networks for male coaches, the Old Boys Club is often reported as a strong barrier against women in coaching (Demers 2009). The difference between females in sport and males in sport is apparent by the difference in the existing social networks.

*On one of my course someone made a good quote sometimes what is stopping females coaches getting higher in these industries is other females. So it's kind of like a stand-off between there maybe is a bit of competitiveness between female to female coaches particularly at the higher levels. Kind of like are your pinching my lime light kind of thing.*

Carla (Football)

Female coaches tend to see each other as competition whereas male coaches tend to work together as demonstrated by the Old Boys Club. However, it is often reported in research that coaches believe that having an absence of female mentor's leads to a lack of career opportunity (Kilty 2006). This would suggest that female coaches would like to work alongside other female coaches, however in this study the coaches' report feeling other female coaches hinder their progression and it creates competition when

working with other female coaches. West, Heilman, Gullet, Moss-Racusin and Magee (2012) supports the notion that women hinder each other's progress. In their study it was found that as the proportion of women in a group increases the group is viewed more negatively and the group become less interested in working with one another.

Female coaches tend to have difficulty developing relationships with athletes. The majority of female coaches felt that male athletes were more likely to misbehave whilst training with them.

*If you have a full boy class and you walk through the door, they do stare at you and whisper and they think we will be able to take the mick out of her, before you even open your mouth they all want to prejudge you.*

Bella (Basketball/Football)

Misbehaviour of male athletes with female coaches stems from a perceived lack of competence in their coaching skills and a lack of respect, which is due to the perceived characteristics of their social role. Manley *et al.* (2010) results showed that the female coach was rated by athletes as less competent than the male coach based on a photo and description of both coaches. This highlights how female coaches tend to be viewed as less competent than male coaches based on assumptions of gender alone. The results of the current study offers an insight into how female coaches struggle to gain respect from male athletes. In previous research, it has been found that female coaches tend to struggle to gain respect from male athletes (Blom *et al.* 2011, Kamphoff, Armentrout and Driska 2010, Norman 2010). The majority of female coaches reported at least one instance of when they had difficulty working with male athletes.

*It was with a men's pub team it didn't work for me. I walked away and it didn't bother me because I knew, I know a lot more than what they did in terms of the game. They were guys who were there for a kick about, they were all overweight and hadn't played football and this kind of stuff. They were all of the thought that females shouldn't be involved.*

### Carla (Football)

Carla's account supports and adds to the existing research. Weiss, Barber, Sisley and Ebbeck (1991) reported that female coaches have negative interactions and often get a lack of respect from athletes. In sport, male coaches tend to be preferred over female coaches. This appears to be more pronounced when female coaches work with male athletes. Lovett and Lowry (1994) found that female coaches were rarely the coach of a male team, however male coaches often coach female teams. This may be caused by the traditional social roles of males and females. Sport remains to be male dominated and this has an effect on women's involvement in sport (Norman 2011). By sport remaining to be perceived masculine and an effective coach being perceived as an individual who possesses masculine traits (Shaw 2007). This places female coaches in a difficult situation as they have to try to conform to both social norms and also sporting norms (LaVoi and Becker 2007).

#### 5.3.1 Coaching Strategies

Female coaches interviewed emphasised numerous strategies that they felt are important to be successful at coaching. Coaching strategies refer to the methods that the coaches employ whilst coaching to help them to overcome the difficulties they face. The majority of coaches place a high degree of importance on being able to demonstrate authority in particular when working with male athletes.

*I think if you show you do have authority, they think ok this isn't going to be a play session but I think if you hold back, obviously I'm quite small and some of the boys are as tall as me, so you have to show them that you are going to teach them and that they have to listen then, as they will probably just try and run circles round you. You really need to be able to show authority.*

### Ann (Gymnastics)

Male athletes tended to assume they can overpower a female coach. Women tend to be viewed as second best to male coaches (Kamphoff 2010). Therefore, female coaches



feel they have to be seen as an authoritarian in order to help manage these stereotypes (Blom *et al.* 2010).

The majority of female coaches, especially those involved in masculine sports mention that they alter their body language to appear more masculine. Female coaches feel it is necessary to alter their body language in an attempt to display characteristics which are in keeping with sport.

*Yes I would say so, in terms of body language that's a big thing as soon as I walk in I pull my shoulders back. Usually I'm a feminine girl but when playing football I have a more athletic stance and walk about me and that comes right out of me when I don't feel as confident. I feel I have to be masculine to show that I have the knowledge.*

Carla (Football)

The association between sport and masculinity places a pressure on female coaches to display masculine characteristics in an attempt to fit in with the sporting norms. Walker and Bopp (2010) found that women placed a greater emphasis on appearing male-like in order to comply with sporting norms. The results of this study show that sport is still perceived as a masculine activity. Femininity in sport can be a positive or negative attribute. This is because in some sports, it is a desirable quality, however in strength based sports it highlights that women have less physical strength than men (Feasey 2008).

Female coaches interviewed placed an importance on being able to demonstrate. Demonstrations appear to help the female coaches show their competence.

*Yes being able to do what you're teaching really. One of my kids was like you can walk the walk and talk the talk. That has just kind of stuck with me if you can walk the walk and talk the talk you do get the kids attention.*

Bella (Basketball/Football)

Female coaches tend to be viewed as less able to coach than male coaches. This relates to the stereotypical assumptions that stem from social roles and sport. However, female coaches are more likely to have gained experience at high level competitions than male coaches (Reade, Rodgers and Norman 2009). Therefore, are more likely to be able to do what they are coaching.

### 5.3.2 Caring in Coaching

Females possess characteristics which are beneficial to relationships such as being caring, nurturing and understanding (Hardman, Bailey and Lord 2015). Social Role Theory outlines the expected gender roles of males and females. Traditionally, women were assigned the role of home maker a role which to an extent has remained apparent in society. The role of home maker was largely involved with looking after children. The female coaches in this study all mention experiencing a heightened sense of mothering towards their athletes.

*I think female to female there is an emotional attachment that motherly instinct. The want to support that side of it.*

Mary (Football)

This heightened sense of mothering most likely stems from the stereotypical beliefs associated with women and children. Women are perceived to be better at dealing with children than men. Haase (2008) found that unlike female teachers that some male teachers don't have a mothering role with their children. The findings of this study suggest that women are more likely to display a mothering nature to children when in roles such as teaching or coaching. This strongly links to the social roles of males and females, specifically mothering is a characteristic which aligns with females opposed to males. In sport it is reported that women are perceived to be better at coaching children due to their ability to be caring and nurturing (Messner 2009 Shaw and Allen 2009).

Caring and nurturing are characteristics which are main components of mothering. The female coaches suggest that having this mothering instinct is an advantage in certain circumstances.

*I think having experience with kids that age you have a kind of mothering side maybe not mothering but a more caring side that kind of gives you an advantage when you have kids of mixed abilities. I think that's quite biased but sometimes when kids cry guys get awkward. Also when kids hurt themselves guys struggle with that being more emotional.*

Betty (Football/Badminton)

Shaw and Hoeber (2003) found that female coaches tend to be preferred for working in youth coaching rather than high performance due to their perceived caring nature. The female coach's mention that they feel their caring goes beyond the expected duty of care of a coach unlike male coaches.

*I don't know it goes beyond a duty of care when we were talking about this in the research group I did apply it to a parental sense of care. I care for them perhaps more than I should.*

Molly (Gymnastics)

Female coaches tend to be perceived as more caring and nurturing than male coaches (Messner 2009). West *et al.* (2001) reports that a female coach was accused of acting like the child's mother. This idea stems from the traditional social roles of males and females. Women showing care towards athletes is less likely to be perceived as inappropriate (Hardman, Bailey and Lord 2015).

The ability of a coach to understand their athlete is important in the coach-athlete relationship. However, the level of understanding in this relationship can be affected by the gender of those involved. Women tend to be viewed as possessing greater levels of empathy so are assumed to possess a greater ability to understand others.

*I suppose some guys are fine, others are just clueless. I think it's a bit of a girly thing. I'm not sure if guys notice it and don't mention it or if they just don't notice it.*

Betty (Football/Badminton)

Toussaint and Web (2005) found that women show higher levels of empathy than men. The results of this study show that women have reported themselves as being more empathic than men, this is related to their traditional gender roles.

*I know with my daughter she is in the performance school and she finds it very difficult training with the boys every day and her coach is excellent but I know that sometimes he can be really insensitive to how they are feeling, how the girls are feeling.*

Mary (Football)

Lorimer and Jowett (2009) believe that coaches who have high levels of empathy are more likely to have good social interactions with athletes. Coaches who have low levels of empathy are more likely to have bad social interactions with athletes (Lorimer and Jowett 2009). This suggests that in terms of understanding female coaches would be better at understanding male and female athletes. However, the coaches tend to view same gender interactions as the most effective in terms of understanding.

*I would see male male and female female working better than mixed sex but then there are lots of cases where it has worked well.*

Bella (Basketball/Football)

Research suggests that women are more empathic than men (Mestre *et al.* 2009). However, in a sporting scenario it was found that female coaches were more empathic than male coaches, but the highest levels of empathic accuracy were found between female athlete and male coach with the lowest being a female athlete and female coach

(Lorimer and Jowett 2009). This would suggest that understanding between coaches of the same gender is not the most effective especially in the instance of female coach and female athlete. The female coaches perceive the levels of understanding to be better with female athletes, as they tend to view themselves as being able to relate to female athletes better which gives them a sense of heightened understanding, however, this contradicts the findings of Lorimer and Jowett.

#### *5.4 Conclusions*

Sports coaching research has highlighted that female coaches tend to have different experiences in sport to male coaches (Norman 2010). It is apparent that the number of female coaches is significantly lower than the number of male coaches (Sports Coach UK 2015). This study develops knowledge of women's experiences in coaching by focusing on gender perceptions in relation to Social Role Theory. The findings suggest that coaches are affected by their traditional gender roles in society and perceptions of women in sport. The coaches interviewed highlighted that their involvement in sport are still to some degree not accepted. Sport is historically and continues to be, a masculine domain which contributes to hindering women's progression and their difficulties gaining respect from athletes and coaches. Female coaches, however display skills which are beneficial in coaching such as a greater ability to care for athletes than male coaches.

In the current study the perceived gender perceptions in relation to Social Role Theory have had an impact on the female coach's experiences of sport. The female coaches mention that they feel perceptions associated with their gender and sport cause them difficulties progressing in coaching, gaining respect and building relationships with other coaches. Sport national bodies and clubs should place an emphasis on creating

work places that are free from discrimination through the introduction of policies and training.

This study highlights the need for further research into understanding how gender affects coach's experiences of sport. The coaches interviewed demonstrate that experiences in coaching vary between sports. Investigation should be carried out on the experiences of individual female coaches within specific sports. The coaches interviewed highlight difficulties working with male athletes and coaches, but some also mention difficulties working with other female coaches. Further research should focus on the relationships of coaches and athletes of different genders working together in sporting environments in traditionally masculine (Rugby) and feminine (Gymnastics) sports. Research should primarily be undertaken at club level as this is the entry point for many coaches into coaching and experiences at this stage need to be understood in order to help with progression. The coaches mention that they feel the courses can sometimes be intimidating which has the potential to discourage individuals from attending. Female coaches' experiences at coach education should be investigated. The information gained could be used to inform future policies aimed at increasing the number of female coaches.

# **CHAPTER SIX**

## **A GENDERED EXPLORATION OF THE LIFE OF A FEMALE TRAMPLOINE COACH: A CASE STUDY**

### *6.0 Introduction*

Internationally, women have increased opportunities for participation in sport, however they are yet to achieve a 45% participation rate at the Olympic Games (Smith and Wrynn 2013). Women haven't seen increased opportunities in leadership positions in sport (Acosta and Carpenter 2012) as they still tend to be occupied by men (International Working Group for Women in Sport. 2012). The number of women present at the higher levels of sports governing bodies is low, (Claringbould and Knoppers 2008) which is similar to coaching in the UK, as they account for 30 % of all coaches and only 10% of Team GB coaching positions (Sport Coach UK 2015).

Hargreaves (1994) suggests sport is gendered and women experience a number of different barriers to progression in sport and coaching as a result of their gender.

Gender inequality is present within sport organisations (Cunningham 2008). In the UK, women haven't gained equality in coaching due to the prevailing coaching models, philosophy and infrastructure (Norman 2008). The gender inequality in sport stems from social roles.

Social Role Theory is concerned with the role that each gender plays in society and how this affects their behaviour and personality. Traditionally, the social role of a woman was to stay at home and the male's social role was to work to secure an income.

However, the role of women in society has changed over time and there has been an increase in women working (Scott, Dex and Joshi 2008). Women remain to face bias when in roles of leadership because there is a conflict between the job role and their

gender role (Eagly 2004). They are also perceived as less competent than men in leadership positions because they aren't perceived to have the necessary characteristics (Eagly and Karau 2002). This highlights the differences in perceptions towards men and women in leadership positions.

Coaching tends to be viewed as a job for men (Kamphoff 2010). Female coaches highlight that elite coaches are always presumed to be male (Norman 2010). Female coaches feel they are perceived to be less competent in comparison to male coaches (Kilty 2006). Manley *et al.* (2010) shows that athletes tend to have a preference towards having a male coach. The perceptions held towards female coaches affect them in other aspects of coaching such as career progression. Females are underrepresented in sports coaching as men tend to occupy the majority of these positions (Breunig and Dion 2008). Female coaches are more likely to work part-time or volunteer as a coach (Reade, Rodgers and Norman 2009). They are also preferred to work with children and in recreational sport settings (Messner 2009).

This body of work has identified that females are underrepresented in coaching, perceived to be less competent and are not preferred by athletes. However, researchers, particularly Norman (2010) have suggested further research explore women coaches' cultures, experiences and implications working within sport. This study attempts to address some of these issues and establish the effect her gender has had on her career in coaching. The previous studies in this thesis have shown that gender influences perceptions held towards female coaches and effects their experiences in sport however it is important to understand the effect gender has throughout a coaches career. The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of a trampolining gymnastics coach. The research explored the gendered experiences of one coach throughout her coaching career.



## *6.1 Method*

A single coach was selected to participate in this study. Throughout the study she is referred to by the pseudonym “Molly”. The criteria for selection in the study of this coach included gender, experience coaching and sport qualifications. Molly is a UKCC level 3 trampoline gymnastics coach who was the Head Coach at her club. She has experience of coaching recreational, competition and national level gymnasts and has been involved in the sport for 9 years. More specific demographic information is not reported to protect her anonymity.

The participant was approached by the principal researcher and invited to participate in the study. When the participant expressed an interest in becoming involved, she was provided with a participant information sheet to take away and read (see Appendix 15). Before taking part in the study, the participant received a verbal explanation of the aims and background of the study, and was asked if she had any questions. The participant was then asked to complete voluntary informed consent forms and interviews were then arranged for a mutually convenient time (see Appendix 16). Two interviews took place in a quiet private location that was within the university. The initial interview was carried out as part of the previous study (Chapter 5) and the second interview was carried out for this study. The interviews were 88 and 128 minutes in duration and were fully audio-recorded. These were then transcribed verbatim.

Data was collected on two separate occasions using an in-depth interview process. On these occasions, the interviews were conducted by the principal researcher. The first interview consisted of three parts (see Appendix 14). A brief introduction to reiterate the conditions of their informed consent and participation, gather background

information and to establish rapport with the participants. The second, part of the interview consisted of a series of open-ended questions. Finally, the interview was concluded by asking Molly whether there were any further issues that she wished to add and a debriefing.

The second interview used a provisional framework which was prepared prior to the interview, but no specific questions were prepared in advance (see Appendix 17). The interview consisted of three parts. A clarification of information from first interview followed by a chronological exploration of her career. The interview concluded by asking Molly if there were any further issues that she wished to add and a debriefing. The interviewer throughout the process was an 'active listener' (Sparkes 2000) helping Molly to discuss and explore her experiences of being a trampoline gymnastics coach over time.

During the interview process, the researcher made notes of their own thoughts and feelings regarding Molly's experiences. These notes were then used to compare to the final transcript, to ensure the participant hadn't been guided to express those views during the interview. During the interview process Molly was encouraged to reflect and explore her experiences in order to reduce uncertainty about her experiences and this was discussed with the research team to determine trustworthiness. The discussion of Molly's experiences, the meanings she attaches to these and how these are categorised achieves a level of respondent trustworthiness. This method has been used in a chronological case study of an elite level athlete whose career was ended early (Sparkes, 2000).

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. This method identifies, analyses, interprets and reports patterns within data. It structures and defines data using rich detail

(Braun and Clarke 2006). The data was analysed using the guidance of Braun and Clarke (2006). Data was read numerous times in order to develop familiarity. Once familiarity with the coach's transcript had been achieved the data was coded. These codes were then collated and listed for the entire data set. Data which had been assigned the same code was then grouped together into identifiable named themes whilst trying to identify any potential overarching ideas. The data contained within each theme was then read in order to check the quotes fitted within the theme, if they didn't the data was either removed, moved to a different theme or the theme was re-worked. The removal of data from themes lead to the creation of new themes or the data being removed from the analysis. Themes were then checked to see if they made sense within the data set. The identified themes were checked to ensure they had individual differences and were able to form a story. Themes were then refined and defined in the writing process, these continued to be refined throughout the writing process with the emergence of new ideas. Rich data was used to support the themes and were set within an analytic tale.

In qualitative research trustworthiness is established by credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba and Lincoln 1985). Credibility is concerned with the degree to which the findings can be believed to be true. Transferability is the ability to apply the findings to another context. Dependability is the ability to replicate the results. Confirmability the demonstration that the findings were caused by the respondents and not the biases or subjectivity of the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1989) outline numerous approaches to establishing trustworthiness such as prolonged engagement external audits and member checks. Creswell (1998) suggested that at least two procedures should be used to ensure trustworthiness. The procedures used in this study were prolonged engagement (credibility) and thick description (transferability). The principal researcher and research team involved themselves in prolonged

engagement with the interview transcripts, in order to become familiar with the participants experiences. The interpretations of the participant's experiences were discussed with two other researchers outside of the study context as part of the analysis. The units which formed the themes were compared by the researchers until all researchers agreed on the central themes. These procedures were carried out to avoid the potential bias arising from a single researcher's interpretation and also contributes to the trustworthiness of the findings. During this process the principal researcher discussed with Molly her experiences and checked these against the themes. In the study the results have been presented by the researchers to show rich and thick descriptions to contribute to the credibility of the study. The rich and thick descriptions help to describe what has been investigated and gives the real life experiences of the participants. This gives the reader the opportunity to evaluate the real life experiences of the participants (Shenton 2004).

## *6.2 Discussion of Findings*

Molly's coaching experiences were effected by factors which encouraged and discouraged her progression in coaching. The factors which encouraged her progression in coaching were the needs of her athletes and support from other coaches. Her progression in coaching was driven by the need to support her athletes and being well supported by fellow coaches who helped her to develop her skills and encouraged her progression. The factors which discouraged her progression in coaching were doubting her coaching ability, physical limitations, lack of money in coaching and pregnancy/family life. Molly mentions instances where she doubts her coaching abilities. She feels her capability to support her gymnastics is at times compromised as she lacks the physical strength to support them. The perception that a career in coaching was associated with uncertainty and low pay deters her from continuing her

involvement. Molly is considering starting a family in the future and feels this would require her to stop coaching for a period of time.

### 6.2.1 Sporting Identity

Molly's experiences make it clear that sport has always been a big part of her life. Her initial experiences of sport were of swimming.

*I started off Swimming if I go right back to the beginning so 4 years old straight in the pool and probably did that till 11 years old. I dropped out of that mainly because the usual didn't want to train early in the morning and it just kind of dominated my life. I used to go round with really bad hair as I wouldn't wear a swimming cap so that came to an end round about 11.*

She dropped out of swimming and took up Hockey. Hockey then became the sport which took over her life.

*I started hockey and then hockey lasted till around 18 years old when I got injured so Hockey did dominate a large part of my life really and I still miss it now but I developed a fear of being hit when I was injured which isn't good when you're in a back position.*

It was at this point she became involved in trampoline gymnastics.

*I kind of got into trampolining through a fluke opportunity that came up through work and I ended up coaching it and doing it.*

*Trampoline wasn't a big part of my life till I was about 18 years old and then it just dominated everything from there. There has always been one sport it just swapped for various reasons.*

Molly became involved in coaching trampoline gymnastics and became head coach of the club.

*The club dominated my life for a long time and my parents would be the first one to remind me of that, it dominated an awful lot. I can't go on holiday that weekend they have a competition, can't go to that family meal they have a competition on in Newcastle and probably lost some friends over it. It wasn't my priority to go out and have drinks at the weekend as I had a competition the next day and they found that hard to understand. So I know everyone isn't like that*

*for example, Jenna it wasn't all or nothing for her she would quite happily have a social life and say I'm not coming coaching tonight, but I struggled to do that.*

Throughout Molly's experience in sport there has always been a sport that has been a big factor in her life. The sports she has been involved in all have a strong association with femininity. Molly allows the sports she is involved in take over her life, this is evident from her first experiences in swimming to becoming involved in gymnastics coaching. Other female coaches have reported a similar experience that being a coach takes over your life (Kamphoff 2010). Molly identifies that not all coaches let the sport take over their life but she identifies that for her this is difficult to avoid.

#### *6.2.2 Late start in sport*

Molly identifies that there are advantages and disadvantages of her starting late in trampoline gymnastics. She identifies that she feels she is more safety aware than coaches who grew up in the sport.

*Probably, I think some people that have come from that background are very complacent with very basic safety things so I know one guy ..... he had been on the Welsh national squad and had been for a long time. He would coach sitting on the side of the trampoline, whilst no one was spotting for the kids, so if they were coming off he would be sat on the mat and they would be straight on the floor. It was basic stuff or he would quite happily get on and throw skills that would look pretty and be excellent skills to look at but again there was no one there spotting for him and is that a good example to be showing to them and I think people like that just get to complacent they are so used to being on a trampoline they forget that one split second and it could go wrong and you end up in a wheel chair, I think they forget that. I think it has helped me as I'm a bit more safety aware and I started competitive trampolining aged 18 and there was enough perspective of fear to understand those things, you don't have the same level of fear when you are 5 or 6 and I think that's the difference.*

It is recommended that safety rules in relation to materials and spotting should be adhered to meticulously in order for injury prevention (Graption, Lion, Gauchard, Barrault and Perin 2013). However, this experience demonstrates how some coaches

who have grown up in the sport can become complacent about safety aspects. She suggests that by growing up in the sport some individuals lack the fear that is associated with injury on a trampoline, however by starting at 18, she was very aware of the associated risks. The awareness of the associated risks is an advantage in coaching trampoline gymnastics, as it means her coaching practice incorporates the appropriate support for her athletes while they train. This is of benefit to the athletes as the potential for injury will be reduced. Molly shows a heightened awareness and concern for her athletes' safety, this is related to her social role.

Molly identifies that people who have been involved in the sport for a long time and are competent at high level skills can at times place unrealistic expectations on their athletes. She feels that by starting later in the sport, she has a better understanding of how difficult it is to do these skills.

*I just said don't do it, don't throw it. They need preparations they need those progressions. I think sometimes people who have been around the sport for a long time find the skills easy and forget that it only takes one little thing to go wrong. It's not as easy as just throwing it. I think every coach I have really knocked heads with is because they take that approach just do it. I have always said to everyone I have mentored don't let me ever hear you say just do it. Always think back to when you were struggling with a skill and think back to how helpful it is when someone says just do it.*

In coaching, progression is a key principle which allows the athlete to develop a wide range of skills whilst steadily progressing in terms of difficulty (Jemni, Sands, Salmela, Holveot and Gateva 2011). In Molly's experience coaches who have been involved in the sport for a long time tend to not use drills and progressions and expect athletes to just be able to do the skills. This is an approach that will potentially lead to injury or difficulty progressing onto further more complex skills.

In particular, she makes it clear that due to her late start in the sport she was socially isolated at times.

*It's just such a tight knit network so even Robert and Nathan weren't from the welsh region, they came there for university but they were still known because of the national level circuit. It was a case of do you know so and so is coming to London. No one had heard of me and I had probably been coaching with the old club and some people still didn't know who I was until I actually set the club up myself. They may have recognised my face but they didn't know who I was and they didn't really care to find out either. It's incredibly tight knit I don't think that is isolated to the region, I'm sure it goes on in other regions as well.*

Molly compares her experience of starting coaching in her region with that of two other coaches. Lyle (1997) proposes that coaches who are ex-athletes benefit from the social networks they developed as athletes. This supports Molly's experience, as it is clear that the two other coaches who both had a background in gymnastics received a better reception from the other coaches. West *et al.* (2001) highlighted that female coaches with experience as an athlete report they find it easier to gain respect and be accepted as a coach. Molly wasn't welcomed whole heartedly into the existing social network in the sport; this was a disadvantage to her as a coach. Molly throughout her experience in trampolene gymnastics continued to feel like an outsider.

*I don't come from that group of people. It's quite clique even though I have made some good friends through the group. I would quite happily have a chat with the national judges, they know who I am. It's because I haven't been there since I was a kid. I don't think they would appreciate someone getting to that level without being around it for a very long time, even though it's been 9 years it's not long enough. Sometimes we used to have problems with certain communications with the club and quite often I put it down to that fact that we were a new club and that I am relatively new to the trampolene circuit. If they did get communicated, it would be weeks down the line after everyone else had found out about it, so I think it can be quite clique.*

Molly's experiences shows how by not growing up in the sport she has been unable to fully integrate into the group. Whisenant and Pederson (2004) suggest that networking is an important factor in coaching which is associated with progression. The inability to integrate into the group fully has led to her perception that her and her club have missed out on opportunities. Despite now being involved in the sport for 9 years, she still



doesn't feel fully included. Through her experiences it is also made clear that ex-gymnasts are preferred as coaches in particular at the higher levels of coaching.

*I have a feeling, Ben never speaks about his own experiences of being a gymnast. I think he was but I'm not sure what level he got up to, he doesn't really like to speak about it. I'm not really sure what happened but I have a feeling he wasn't born into it, he wasn't into it as a competitor for a very long time. I think he found some objections to him coming in and coaching which is quite ironic, as he is one of the more respected level 5 coaches that we have in the welsh region. He keeps his own experience as a gymnast very quiet because he didn't get that high either.*

Becker (2009) found that athletes prefer to work with a coach who has experience competing within the sport. In sport, there is an assumption that in order to be a good coach you must have been a good athlete, however this is not a necessary requirement (Lyle 2002). West *et al.* (2001) highlights how female coaches who have competitive national and international experience within sport believe those without this experience would be unable to coach high level athletes. Trampoline gymnastics is a sport which privileges those who participate from youth level and achieve a high level of competitive performance. This causes individuals who are new to the sport or haven't reached a high competitive level to struggle to gain acceptance and be incorporated into the existing network.

#### 6.2.3 Factors that encouraged progression in coaching

Molly's progression in coaching was based on the needs of her athletes rather than her own desire to progress.

*It was a case of when our head coach got sacked, I had to set the club up on my own. I became very aware kids in the club were doing skills in the club beyond my qualified skills set, so I had to go on a level 3.*

She continued to progress in coaching to support the needs of her athletes. This demonstrates her continued progression was associated with her need to care and support her gymnasts.

*I got very comfortable as a level three. The only reason I started my technical modules was because I had people who couldn't enter competitions unless I went on them, so it was for the gymnasts I went on them and any further progression would have been for them as well.*

The characteristics which have influenced her progression in coaching are strongly associated with her gender role. Molly didn't attend the courses in order to further her own career so was not encouraged by her own ambition to progress but did so in order to support the gymnasts therefore she was influenced by the need to care and look after her gymnasts. West (2001) found that female coaches often advance in their coaching career due to the success of their athletes.

Molly was also well supported by fellow coaches throughout her coaching career. In sports coaching the support of other coaches is important for progression and development (Shaw and Allen 2009). Throughout her career three male coaches were the most constant and influential mentors. 'Ben' acted as Molly's mentor over the course of her involvement in trampoline gymnastics.

*The university I went to had an operational club, outside of the university obviously set up and he just happened to be the welsh national coach as well and I had him for a couple of lectures, so trampoline lectures he kind of took me under his wing a little bit.*

*He was a massive help and a mentor to me, he actually mentored me through my coaching courses more so than the head coach in our club. He thought he was mentoring but actually just left me to get on with it whereas Ben made me think about what I was saying and biomechanically was this the best way to teach a somersault. Is this the best way to teach it or should we teach it a different way? Even starting to question the coaching manuals. Is this the best place to support a forward somersault or should it be more round the centre of gravity? So he was a great help in terms of technical content. A brilliant guy he knew technical skills inside out.*

The support Molly gained from Ben throughout her coaching career was crucial. She makes it clear that without his support she would have been unable to gain her qualifications.

*Without him, I wouldn't of got anywhere near the qualifications I did get.*

The support and mentoring of female coaches by male coaches helps to develop their confidence and knowledge, this is referred to as 'gender sponsorship' (Messner 2009). Molly however, is in the minority of women who has managed to gain a mentor (Greenhill *et al.* 2009). It is often reported by female coaches that they feel they are not supported by other coaches (Kerr 2009). The experience of being mentored has been crucial to Molly's development; this shows the importance of female coaches gaining mentors. Mentoring is important for all coaches, however more so when women struggle to obtain higher levels of coaching qualifications and management positions. It has been found that continuing support from male coaches is found to be helpful to female coaches (Avery, Tonidandel and Phillips 2008).

Molly's has benefitted from being supported by her mentor but also by other fellow coaches. Bruening and Dixon (2008) found that support from assistant coaches was beneficial.

*I felt incredibly comfortable around Nathan and Robert because they knew my background and even helped me catch up. Nathan started gymnastics late he maybe did a bit of gymnastics but he started it when he went to university. He advanced a lot quicker than I did. He would be the first one to say why don't you train with the university team and I would be like n, just no I don't want to do it. He would quite often get on a trampoline with me at university teaching time and he was quite relaxed. I trusted him completely both him and Mark they knew my background and knew I was scared of certain skills. They knew I struggled with certain things and they were able to come along and help me.*

Molly's mentoring by the male coaches, whether formal or informal was invaluable to her development as a coach. The relationship Molly had with these male coaches is unusual in terms of coaching research. Female coaches often report being excluded, challenged, intimidated and analysed by male coaches (Messner 2009). However, Molly felt fully incorporated into their group and was comfortable working with them. Female coaches often report instances where male coaches demean them (Norman 2011). Molly was in a position where the male coaches' practical coaching skills were more advanced than her own but the coaches supported her.

Molly always attended her coaching courses with others. The majority of her coaching courses she attended with Nathan and Robert. She says that having support whilst on the courses was helpful.

*I know the three of us have certainly said are you going on this coaching module, are you going on this one. I know mark has said if you are not doing that one I will wait till the next one. There was always this unwritten rule that we would probably go on the same courses and stick together and do it. It helped me massively. I don't know what it would have been like to do it without them, Nathan was on all of my courses. Robert was just on the last couple so I have never been in a position where I haven't known somebody. On my first one I met Nathan and I went on the course with one of the other girls from the leisure centre.*

Female coaches often report that going on coaching courses is intimidating due to the large numbers of males (Norman 2010). However, the types of relationships Molly formed are likely to be useful in progressing female coaches' qualifications and career.

#### 6.2.4 Factors that discouraged progression in coaching

Throughout the interviews, Molly highlighted instances where she doubted her coaching abilities. She identifies this as a factor which would stop her progressing further in coaching.

*I think it's my own estimation of my abilities which would stop me to be honest.*

Female coaches tend to have low confidence, perceptions of a lower coaching competence and tend to doubt their suitability to their coaching positions (LaVoi and Becker 2007). This stems from beliefs that coaching is perceived to be a job for men (Kamphoff 2010) and that male coaches tend to be preferred by athletes (Manley *et al.* 2010). Molly tended to doubt her own ability despite often being encouraged and supported by other coaches to continue to progress in coaching qualifications. Beth a fellow coach at her club also displays the tendency to doubt her own ability.

*Beth has not long got in touch with me to ask if she should do a level 3 or not. I think the difference is that Beth has questioned it, whereas Matthew is straight in there happy to do it, so I guess in terms of a gender split she is immediately questioning her competence and she is more competent than I was as she has done those skills.*

The difference in confidence to progress between Beth and Matthew further supports the results of La Voi and Becker (2007). Greenhill *et al.* (2009) found that male coaches would apply for a sports coaching job even if they didn't meet all the recommended criteria whereas female coaches wouldn't apply unless they met all the recommended criteria. This result suggests that female coaches tend to doubt their ability more than male coaches and supports the work of La Voi and Becker (2007).

Molly discusses the physical limitations and challenges she faces when coaching, highlighting them as a barrier to further progression in sport.

*I think probably some other female coaches have the same problems. It's a really strange thing because when you are doing that job you don't want to admit you struggle physically to do certain things. You don't ever want to admit it but it's a reality. I do struggle physically to manoeuvre some of the gymnasts, particularly through the more complex skills because they are that bit older. When they are little you can fling them about but when you are talking about an 18-20 year old male who is taller than me bigger than me has more muscle than me. How am I supposed to run in? You have their weight plus gravity to catch them, it's ludicrous.*

West *et al.* (2001) found that a female gymnastics coach was often criticised over her physical competence at supporting her gymnasts during complex skills. Molly is aware she struggles to support her gymnasts and has tried to overcome this problem.

*It's just not going to happen. I'm just not strong enough, it's not because I don't try. I did strength training in the gym but I will never be able to carry that kind of weight or be able to lift more than my own body weight. I don't think. I will never be able to catch someone my own body weight whereas he can. He is a lot more competent and stronger.*

Molly suggests that her limitations in being able to support her gymnasts stem from her gender. Women tend to be thought of as weaker than men due to variations in their bodies. Women tend to have less muscle mass than men (Janssen, Haymsfield, Wang and Ross 2000) and tend to be smaller than men (BBC 2010). The differences between male and female bodies make males more suited to the physical supporting of gymnasts due to them having a physical advantage over females. Male coaches are better suited to support gymnasts than female coaches which ties in with the traditional roles of males and females.

Molly thought seriously about continuing her involvement in the sport by opening a trampoline centre, however was discouraged from pursuing this due to a perceived lack of sustainability.

*I did consider it for a long time. The opportunity came up for me to set up a trampoline facility which would be almost pure trampoline based. It was always my fall back option but when I did the business plans and stuff for it in my mind it is not a big money maker. I wasn't sure it was viable obviously you have these trampoline parks at the moment popping up, although it's really popular I think it's quite a short lived thing, once you have been to one trampoline park you have been to them all. I think you would have the initial peak of everyone wanting to go and see what it's all about and then massively drop off. My interest has always been in club sport so competitive trampolining and not recreational classes which is where you make the money. I think I would consider it if a career in academia fell on its face but I'm not sure how sustainable it is as a business.*

Molly's experience is supported by Kerr and Marshall (2007) who found that female coaches were disinterested in pursuing a career in coaching due to the instability of the job. Female coaches often leave coaching due to having a low wage (Kamphoff 2010). Wrethner (2005) suggested that women would be more interested in continuing a career in coaching if they were given salaried positions.

*I probably would re-look at it if someone offered me £30,000 a year to do it. But I doubt anyone would, there isn't enough money in it.*

In order for female coaches to attain salaried positions they would need to have contracted coaching work, however with the high competition for coaching jobs they are less likely to secure these positions (Shaw and Allen 2009). Reade, Rodgers and Norman (2009) found that female coaches are significantly less likely than male coaches to have a full time job in sports coaching. Female coaches are perceived to lack the necessary stereotypical characteristics to be a leader which hinders their progression in sports coaching. A minority of women coaches are starting to achieve high profile positions such as Shelley Kerr, who became the first female manager in Scottish Senior Football (BBC 2014). The progression of women in sport persists to be behind the advancements seen in other occupations (Kerr and Marshall 2007).

Molly is at a time in her life where she is considering starting a family in the near future and feels this would require her to stop coaching for a period of time. This discourages her from further pursuing an involvement in coaching.

*Again now more than ever, if I did commit to it how long would that be for. If I was to have a family it would be me getting pregnant and not my other half. I mean it's crossed my mind before when I was in a relationship in Cardiff. Can you even get on a trampoline when you're pregnant? I would probably advise against it from a coaching point of view, so it would only be a matter of time before I would have to leave again. Obviously you get pregnant, you have to carry it but it's not just for that period, it's the period after where you are the*

*main care giver. The main person that looks after the baby, so it would only be a matter of time before I would have to leave them again.*

Coaching is a physically demanding job as coaches are required to support and catch gymnasts. This requirement would make coaching gymnastics highly inadvisable, if not impossible during pregnancy, due to the risk of contact with a falling gymnast. This means she would have to stop coaching for a period of time. In sports, coaching during pregnancy and motherhood can be hard to combine (Robertson 2007). Molly feels that she would need to stop coaching in order to start a family. Female coaches often report that a barrier they face in coaching is balancing work and family (Bruening and Dixon 2007). It is perceived that women are unable to combine the role of mother and coach (Kandiyoti 1991). This perception is caused by the expected gender role of woman (Merceier 2000) and by popular ideas about new mothers and work. Despite this, the number of stay at home mums is the lowest ever (Office for National Statistics 2015). Molly places a high importance on being the main caregiver to her child which is in keeping with her expected gender role. The association between females and the main caregiver role originates from Social Role Theory. Traditionally the social role of a woman was to stay at home. They were assigned the role of homemaker due to them having children and them being relied on to maintain the home (Owen Blakemore, Barenboim and Liben 2009). This role to a degree has stayed assigned to women throughout generations and now shapes their expected behaviours (Eagly, Wood and Diekmann 2000). However, some women manage to combine the role of coach and mother. Robertson (2007) outlines a range of experiences of high level female coaches in synchronised swimming, rugby, speed skating and rowing who have continued coaching whilst pregnant and returned after giving birth although coaches have had to heavily rely on other family members to help bring up their children. It is apparent that the range of support available to female coaches during pregnancy is variable and there



are a lack of guidelines on coaching and pregnancy. In the UK 60% of mothers with a child under the age of three are involved in work (NHS 2015). After having children some women return to coaching after a period of time whilst others never return (Robertson 2007). This shows that there are similarities between going back to coaching and work after having a child.

### *6. 3 Coaching in Practice*

In the UK 70% of all coaches are men and 30 % of coaches are women (Sport Coach UK 2015). Women however make up only 17% of qualified coaches and 10% of Great British coaching positions (Sport Coach UK 2015). Thus, there are fewer women coaches than male coaches, fewer qualified female coaches than male and a minority of women that coach at international level. Molly observes that in her sport there are more highly qualified male coaches than female coaches.

*There is definitely more higher qualified males coaches than female coaches. I wouldn't say I was a rarity but level 3 being female there are a couple. The female coach I went along to a couple of sessions with in the university club was level 4. I think there was talk of her doing HPC but I think she retired before she got there she was probably a rarity being level 4 and female so even more rare was a HPC female coach. It seems to be obvious you have to go through the system to get to HPC but there always seems to be more male higher qualified coaches than female. It's like the boys do UKCC level 1 and 2 and then hide until there qualified and re appear at level 3, 4, and 5. I don't know how that happens but it does seem too.*

Reade, Rodgers and Norman (2009) found that in Canada similar numbers of male and female coaches attend the early stages of coach education programs. Therefore at the early stages of coaching there are no significant differences between potential male and female coaches gaining access to courses. Molly found that male coaches seemed to progress faster than female coaches. Trampoline gymnastics is a sport associated with femininity, it has a high number of female participants and coaches (British Gymnastics 2013). However, despite this, they are not progressing through the coach development

framework as quickly or in the same number as their male counterparts. Women's progression is affected by the perception that they possess skills which make them better suited to coaching children (Messner 2009). Children tend to be lower level participants. Therefore, the majority of coaches may not see a need to progress through the coaching levels. West *et al.* (2001) found that female coaches were expected to only be involved in sport for a short duration until they got married and had children. This perception impacts female's opportunities to progress in coaching. Women's progression in coaching is effected by many factors in relation to pregnancy, however, research in this area remains underdeveloped. Pregnancy effects the experiences of female coaches but so does the expectations of pregnancy for coaches who are planning to have a family in the future. Future research should look at the perceptions female coaches have towards continuing coaching and starting a family.

Molly identifies that her care for her athletes went beyond a duty of care. Female coaches tend to be perceived to be naturally caring and nurturing (Messner 2009, Hardman, Bailey and Lord 2015).

*I think I was always very aware that these kids have parents themselves. They don't need me as a mother. However, my care for them probably went far beyond a duty of care because like I said I used to make this a priority. I was making them a priority and not my own life and that has probably delayed my own career. Somebody once, put it to me like if a car was coming towards one of the kids. Would you put yourself in front of the car? The answer is yes. I would and that is beyond a duty of care as a coach and an athlete, you have no responsibility to do that what so ever, but I would do that for them any one of them.*

West *et al.* (2001) found that a female coach was told by a male coach that she acted like the child's mother. Female coaches are often presumed to be more caring than male coaches. This notion stems from the traditional social roles of men and women. Women tend to be associated with the characteristics of nurturing and caring (Eagly, Wood and

Diekman 2000). However, she identifies that some male coaches also go beyond a duty of care with their athletes.

*Margaret was mummying. I would say there was a certain level of mothering care in my coaching and we are both female but then I have seen it in Ben. Ben is not the most masculine male I have ever met in my life. I have to say that for him, not that he is feminine but he is not an alpha male he doesn't engage in laddish behaviour he has very gentle demeanour the way he speaks to kids he is very gentle. So I'm not sure I could actually say there is a definitive gender division there but I could say there is something going on there with more feminine qualities in personality and the level of care. Whereas some of the very male alpha male coaches I know couldn't give two hoots what the gymnasts were up to outside of the training hall. They obviously have a duty of care to that child and they follow that through but it's a different level so definitely. I can't draw any lines but there is evidence there that more feminine coaches display a different level of care.*

Research in sports coaching tends to suggest that females are more likely to be caring and nurturing towards athletes, however in Molly's experience some male coaches also show these characteristics (Messner 2009, Hardman, Bailey and Lord 2015, West *et al.* 2001). This suggests that the sex of an individual isn't solely responsible for the levels of caring and nurturing shown towards athletes. However, due to females association with mothering it is more accepted for them to display higher levels of caring towards athletes. Hardman, Bailey and Lord (2015) found that women were more able to show care towards athletes as they were less at risk of being viewed as inappropriate.

#### *6.4 Conclusion*

Women have increased opportunities for participation in sport (Smith and Wrynn 2013). However, the number of female coaches is significantly lower than the number of male coaches (Sports Coach UK 2015). In sports coaching research it is often highlighted that female coaches tend to have different experiences to male coaches (Norman 2010). This study developed the knowledge of women's experiences in coaching by focusing on one coach's gendered experiences over the course of her

coaching career. The findings suggest that coaches' careers are affected by their gendered roles in society and by their sporting background. Specifically, they face difficulties when starting late in a sport, such as being socially isolated and not being respected due to your own lack of sporting achievement in the sport. The study reveals the factors that help to support progression in coaching; the needs of her athletes and support from other coaches. The experiences highlight factors which discouraged her progression in coaching; doubting her coaching ability, physical limitations, lack of money in coaching and pregnancy/family life.

The study gives an insight into the experiences of a female Trampoline Gymnastics coach. The findings are not transferable to all female coaches, but they demonstrate the experiences of a female coach in a coaching environment which gives an insight into the experiences of women in sport. This study highlights the need for further research into understanding how gender affects a coach's experiences. An area that needs to be continued to be investigated is the experiences of individual female coaches within specific sports. The coach in this study was involved in a traditionally feminine sport, however it would be of interest to study a female coach who was involved in coaching a traditionally masculine and neutral sport. Further research should also look in depth at the factors which encourage and discourage females from continuing to coach. This would be beneficial in order to gain valuable information which could help to encourage and keep females involved with coaching. An emphasis should be placed on research looking at coaches' feelings towards coaching and planning a family/pregnancy. The majority of this research should be undertaken at club level as this is the entry point for many coaches into coaching and experiences at this stage need to be understood in order to help with progression. The study also highlights the importance of researching the experience of coaches at coach education courses. Molly

and other coaches arranged to go on courses at the same time so she never attended a course alone. It is important to gain a better understanding of how coaches feel in relation to training courses in order to improve how courses are delivered. The information gained could be used to inform future policies aimed at increasing the number of female coaches.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this programme of research was to explore the gendered perceptions of women in sport coaching. The objectives were to;

- a) Provide (illustrative) accounts of how the sex and gender of a coach is perceived by athletes and other coaches (in various coaching contexts).
- b) Identify and produce examples of how female coaches' personal experiences are gendered in nature.
- c) To produce both quantitative and qualitative data to evidence accounts of the sexed/gendered coach.

This chapter summarises the focus and key findings of the four studies which were undertaken during the research period and how the overarching aim and objectives of the programme of research have been met within them. It will discuss the contribution to the field of research in sports coaching, limitations of the project, implications for theory, practice and the directions of future research.

### *7. 0 Summary of the research*

#### 7.0.1 Study one –

##### The influence of gender on coach-athlete relationship quality and coach empathy

This study was conducted to determine if there was a difference in how male and female coaches are perceived because of their gender. This study investigated the influence that the gender of a coach and athlete has on perceptions of external raters towards a coach and the quality of the coach-athlete relationship.

Forty-one participants (16 males, 25 females,  $M_{age}=32.76$   $SD=\pm 11.57$ ) who were coaches and athletes (20 coaches and 21 athletes) watched four videos each depicting a coach and an athlete having a conversation about the athlete's de-selection and each featured different gender combinations. The gender combinations in the videos were male coach with a male athlete, male coach with a female athlete, female coach with a male athlete and female coach with a female athlete. Participants rated the coach on perceived relationship quality (closeness, commitment and complementarity) and perceived affective and cognitive empathy.

The results indicated a main effect for coach gender with female coaches being rated higher than male coaches for relationship quality and empathy, and a main effect for athlete gender with all coaches perceived as displaying a greater level of affective empathy when paired with a female athlete. This may be due to the focus on relationship quality which is associated with their social role. Females tend to be perceived as being caring, sociable and understanding whereas men tend to be seen as assertive and aggressive (Eagly and Wood, 1991). Social Role Theory is a productive framework to guide future coaching research as it highlights the gender based differences between coaches. Male coaches in emotional coaching situations need to be aware of how athletes perceive them in relation to their gender so that they can try to alter their behaviour. The interaction of a coach/athlete gender plays a role in how a coach is perceived.

### 7.0.2 Study two –

#### How perceived perceptions of a female coach's masculinity/femininity influences perceptions of coach-athlete relationship quality, coaching competency and empathy

This study was conducted to determine if the masculinity/femininity of a female coach would influence others' perceptions of their ability and the coach-athlete relationship.

The aim of the study was to determine how the manipulation of a female coach to appear masculine or feminine influences perceptions of that coach's competency, relationship quality and empathy with their athletes.

Seventy-three participants (44 males, 29 females,  $M_{age} = 23.8 \pm 8.41$  years) were divided into two groups. Each participant watched two videos, one depicting a female coach manipulated to appear particularly feminine and one of the same coach made to appear overly masculine. The female coach's appearance was manipulated by altering clothing, hair style and body language. The coach was depicted with male athletes or female athletes. Footage of the coach and athletes was standardised and re-combined to create each video (e.g., feminine coach footage paired with male athlete footage).

Participants rated the coach manipulated in different ways using the Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire, (Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004) the Coaching Competency Scale (Myers *et al.*, 2006) and the Questionnaire of Cognitive and Affective Empathy (Reniers *et al.*, 2011).

The results of the study showed a significant main effect for coach, with the masculine coach being rated consistently higher within relationship quality and competency. There was also a significant main effect for athlete gender, with affective empathy being rated higher when the coach worked with male athletes. A coach's gendered identity influences how they are perceived in their role. Increased levels of masculinity result in



more positive perceptions of relationship quality and competency. This may be due to masculinised females being more closely aligning to stereotypes of leadership roles.

### 7.0.3 Study 3-The experiences of female coaches in sport

Study three explored the experiences of a group of female coaches. The purpose of the study was to investigate how the issues raised in studies 1 and 2 regarding the influence of gender on perceptions of a coach may have influenced the experiences of female sport coaches.

Seven participants from a variety of sports (Badminton, Basketball, Football, Gymnastics, Skiing and Trampoline Gymnastics) were interviewed about their reflections of their experiences of sports coaching. Thematic analysis revealed 4 key themes; popular gendered ideas about sport, male dominated environments, coaching strategies and caring in coaching.

The findings indicated that coaches' experiences of sport were affected by traditional social roles which were gendered in nature. The coaches had all experienced occasions where they felt their presence in sport was not accepted. The continued perception of sport as a male domain creates problems for female coaches in relation to progression in coaching and gaining respect from colleagues and athletes. The coaches felt it was harder for them to progress in coaching than male coaches. The coaches often referred to their greater ability to care for athletes in comparison to male coaches. Ultimately, coaches are affected by notions of traditional social roles for men and women and society's perceptions of sport as a masculine domain. These factors contribute to the hindering of women's progression in their coaching careers and difficulties gaining respect. However, female coaches' referred to having a higher level of care and

empathy for their athletes, in comparison to their male counterparts. This offers promising and positive contributions to coaching professions.

#### 7.0.4 Study 4 –

##### A gendered exploration of the life of a female trampoline coach: A case study

This study followed on from study three to try and establish the effect of gender across a coach's career in more depth by exploring the experiences of a female coach in trampoline gymnastics. The purpose of this study was to examine the influences that led to an individual becoming involved in trampoline gymnastics coaching and her experiences throughout her involvement in the sport.

Two in-depth interviews were conducted which lasted 88-minutes and 128-minutes. A thematic analysis revealed the importance the coach placed on sport throughout her life and career. The study highlights the difficulties that are faced when starting late in trampoline gymnastics such as feeling the outsider and the existing preference for high level ex-gymnasts as coaches. The analysis identifies the factors that supported her progression in coaching were the needs of her athletes and support from other coaches. The factors which discouraged her progression in coaching doubted her coaching ability, physical limitations, lack of money in coaching and pregnancy/family life. She perceived that males tend to hold higher coaching qualifications and that a coach's duty of care towards their athletes differs. The coach's experiences within sport are discussed in relation to social role theory.

Collectively these four studies have addressed the overall aim and objectives of this programme of research. The first objective of this research was to provide (illustrative) accounts of how the sexed and gendered coaching body is perceived by athletes and other coaches. This research has revealed that female coaches are rated higher than

male coaches for relationship quality and empathy, however, they are perceived as less competent at coaching than male coaches. The results show how increased levels of masculinity in a female coach result in more positive perceptions of relationship quality and competency. The results also reveal that female coaches actively try to be perceived as more masculine when coaching in order to be perceived more positively. The second objective was to identify and produce examples of how female coaches' personal experiences are gendered in nature. The findings indicated that coaches' experiences of sport were affected by traditional social roles which were gendered in nature. For example, coaches had all experienced occasions where they felt their presence in sport was not accepted. The results indicated that pregnancy/family life were factors which discouraged the progression of a female coach. The third objective of this research was to provide both quantitative and qualitative data to evidence accounts of the sexed/gendered body in coaching. This thesis provides quantitative and qualitative data to evidence accounts of the sexed/gendered body in coaching. Overall, this thesis demonstrates that female coach's experiences of coaching are influenced by their gender in numerous ways such influencing their behavior and how they choose to present themselves, impacting on how they are perceived by athletes and other coaches, and potentially affecting their ability to progress within the profession of sports coaching.

### *7.1 Limitations of the thesis*

While this programme of research has addressed the aims and objectives of the project the contributions of the final thesis must be considered against its limitations. While the limitations of each individual study have previously been discussed, this section offers a summary and considers these in the context of the thesis as a whole.

In study one the videos depicted a discussion about deselection taking place privately outside of the training environment. This may have created a greater emphasis on the social interaction and communication behaviours of the coach and the athlete. Had the scenario depicted a more traditional coaching environment with instruction and training, it could be argued that the emphasis would have been more focused on the coaches' knowledge, practical ability, and directive behaviours. If this is the case, male and female coaches may be rated as more or less effective, depending on the context in which they are acting. In study two the video focused on a coaching session in order to understand how female coaches were perceived in a practical coaching setting.

The scenario's depicted in study one and two was created to be sport-neutral. That is, no references are made to any specific sport or sport-type (e.g., mentioning a sport name, specific skills or equipment). While this controlled for this variable, it also meant that the influence of sport-type was not explored. Different sports have a level of perceived masculinity or femininity influenced by the gender of those who traditionally participate in those sports as well as the actual activities involved in the sports (Koivula, 2001). For example, contact sports such as rugby or combat sports tend to be traditionally seen as masculine while artistic sports such as gymnastics are often seen as feminine (Hardin and Greer 2009). There may be a potential interaction of the genders of the coach and athlete with the perceived gender of the sport that influences how a coach and the quality of their relationship with an athlete are perceived. It may be where the coach gender aligns with that of the sport that they are perceived more favourable.

The scenarios depicted in study one and two were sport neutral, however because of this these participants may have projected their own sport on to the videos. This may mean despite the efforts to keep the videos sport neutral participants automatically may

have assumed the video was about their sport. This means that potentially participants will have viewed the videos rating the coach in terms of the norms for their own individual sport. The participants in the study were all from mixed sports which will have helped to limit this effects impact on the results.

The results of study three and four give an insight into the experiences of female coaches. The findings in this study are not applicable to all female coaches, but they demonstrate experiences of female coaches within a coaching environment which gives a valuable insight into their experiences in sport (Sparkes and Smith 2014). The findings within these studies are based on the perceptions of female coaches and may not reflect accurately the feelings of bias or discrimination as just because they perceive themselves to be discriminated against doesn't mean this occurs (Sudgen 2012).

The limitations in this thesis are partially overcome by the use of mixed quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative approaches gave statistical significance to the perceptions of athletes and coaches towards coaches (male coach, female coach, masculine female coach and feminine female coach) shown in videos. However, the limitations in these studies were that the sporting context was either a private meeting or a coaching session and no sport specific references were shown in the videos. The qualitative research offers insights into the experiences of female coaches within different sport settings and different sports. This has helped to overcome the limitations of the quantitative studies. The quantitative studies also help to support the expressed experiences of the female coaches in the qualitative studies.

## *7.2 Advancements in theory*

In this section, the discussion aims to link the findings of the studies with theories and findings outlined in the literature review as well as highlighting the contribution that this thesis makes to this field of study as a whole.

### 7.2.1 Social role theory and coach behaviours

The results of the studies in this thesis help to support existing research in Social Role Theory. Eagly (1987) suggested Social Role Theory after studying the differences between social behaviours and personality characteristics of males and females. The main focus is on the expectations people have of both genders and its effects on society (Wharton 2006). The traditional social roles of male and females are that of economic provider and homemaker (Owen, Blakemore and Liben 2009). These roles have stayed assigned to the genders throughout generations and now shape the behaviours of males and females (Eagly, Wood and Diekmann 2000). The results of study three show that women's presence in sport is often not accepted, this stems from the expectations placed on females due to their traditional social role.

Social Role Theory emphasises the differences in behaviour between men and women which are agency and communion. Females are expected to show better relationship skills than males due to their closer association with communal behaviour traits and their role as homemaker. The results of the thesis support that there are observable differences in expected behaviour between males and females, for example, in study one female coaches were rated higher in empathy and relationship quality than male coaches by external raters. This is further supported by the results of study three that female coaches felt they were better at caring for athletes than male coaches and study four when the coach felt her care for her athletes went beyond a duty of care. These findings support Social Role Theory as there is an apparent divide in the perceived

behaviours of male and female coaches. The results of study one suggest that behaviours of male and female athletes also differ, as the female athlete was rated higher in affective empathy than the male athlete when working with male and female coaches. Study three found that female coaches believe that they have a mothering instinct which makes them more suited to working with children. This demonstrates that female coaches although in a sporting setting are still occupying their traditional gender role as the homemaker by working with children. This result was surprising as it has been found that when women are in leadership positions, it tends to take priority over their gender role (Eagly and Johnson 1990). It has been suggested that gender stereotypes are only activated when no job role information is apparent (Harrison 2005). Therefore, it was expected that males and females behaviour characteristics would be perceived to be similar in the role as a coach. In this research it was always apparent that the female actor was in the position of coach, therefore this indicates that when a female occupies a leadership position in sport, her gender role remains more prominent than her leadership position.

Social Role Theory emphasises that a women's traditional role was as homemaker (Owen, Blakemore and Liben 2009). This role remains to be associated with women (Eagly, Wood and Diekmann 2000). In study four the coach discusses how her plans for family discourage her from progressing in coaching. The coach places an emphasis on being the main care giver to her child and not her partner. The coach's views support the gendered expectations of traditional social roles. Robertson (2007) found that trying to combine family life and sports coaching was difficult.

This thesis helps to extend the understanding of Social Role Theory by applying it to sports coaching. Social Role Theory is applicable in sports coaching due to the dependence on masculine and feminine qualities. Coaching requires masculine traits

such as leadership and physicality but also feminine traits such as communication and caring (Lyle 2002). The thesis also draws attention to how traditional social roles affect women's participation in sport, in regards to their acceptance and family planning. The thesis has supported existing findings of Social Role Theory and developed the application of this theory in sports coaching using innovative methods.

#### 7.2.2 Role Congruity Theory and leadership perceptions in sports coaching

Eagly and Karaus (2002) role congruity theory outlines that bias occurs, because there is conflict between the gender role stereotypes and the perceived roles associated with leadership (Eagly 2004). The stereotypes that are related to males and females strengthen the perception that women are responsible for caring whereas men are supposed to be in charge (Hoyt 2010). These stereotypes are associated with the agentic and communal characteristics which are assigned to males and females in social role theory. Men tend to be viewed as leaders because their traditional gender role characteristics are similar to the characteristics needed to be in a position of power such as a coach. Role congruity theory suggests that women in leadership positions will face more negative attitudes and prejudice when there is a greater degree of perceived mismatch between the leader prototype and female gender role stereotype (Eagly and Karau 2002). Flannigan *et al.* (2003) found that when an individual works in a role which is incongruent to their traditional gender role, this tends to influence how they are perceived. For example, males occupying a leadership role, such as being a sports coach, tend to be aligned with their social role, being in a position of power and displaying agency characteristics. However, a female in a similar position may be perceived less favourable as her position as a sports coach conflicts with her traditional social role (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs and Tamkins, 2004). Female coaches face a degree of mismatch between their work role and gender role as sport closely aligns with



masculinity and helps to showcase masculine behaviours such as aggression, competitiveness and their physical abilities (Coakley 2006).

The results of study three supports that females in sport tend to face difficulties being accepted as sports coaches. The study outlines that female coaches often struggle to gain acceptance from society, coaches and athletes in their role as a coach but more so in traditionally masculine sports. The struggle to gain acceptance reported by the female coaches' stems from the role congruity between their work role and their gender role.

The role incongruity that female coaches face tends to cause them a variety of difficulties in coaching roles. Eagly (2005) suggests women struggle to develop relational authenticity when occupying leadership positions due to them not being accepted by their followers. Norman (2013) reported that female coaches feel that they had to work harder than male coaches to gain respect with athletes. Likewise, Kamphoff, Armentrout and Driska (2010) found that the majority of coaches mentioned they had difficulty gaining respect from athletes and others involved. The results of study three support these findings as the majority of female coaches felt they had to work harder than male coaches to gain respect from athletes in particular with male athletes. This could be potentially explained by the more pronounced role incongruity caused by female coaches being in a position of leadership coaching over male athletes. Yiamouyiannis (2008) found that a female coach working with male athletes seems to be the least accepted coaching scenario.

The confidence of female coaches is affected by their perceived role incongruity due to commonly held beliefs that coaching is perceived to be a job for men (Kamphoff 2010) and that male coaches tend to be preferred by athletes (Manley 2010). Female coaches tend to have low perceived confidence, competence and tend to doubt their suitability to

their coaching positions (LaVoi and Becker 2007). The results of study four show that the coach often doubts her own abilities and shows an awareness of other female coaches doubting their own abilities. The role incongruity of female coaches creates difficulties for them progressing in coaching positions and achieving paid employment. It has been noted that large numbers of women start in coaching, however few ever progress to higher levels of participation (Sports Coach UK 2002). Kerr and Marshall (2007) found that female coaches face difficulties progressing in sport and suggest that females' progression in sport lags behind the workplace. The results of study three and four highlight that female coaches find it difficult to gain paid employment in sports coaching and acquire head coach positions.

The results of study two show that when a female coach is perceived to be more masculine she is rated higher in motivation, character building, technique and strategy than when she is perceived to be more feminine. Therefore, by being perceived to be more masculine the female coach is viewed more positively. In study three some of the female coaches admitted to altering their behaviours to appear more masculine in order to prove they had the necessary knowledge to be a coach. The finding of these studies shows that perceptions towards female coaches are altered by portraying a more masculine appearance and characteristics. This may be caused as a result of the female coach becoming more closely associated with her work role however, female coaches shouldn't have to alter their appearance or behaviour.

This thesis helps to extend the understanding of Role Congruity Theory by applying it to sports coaching. Role Congruity Theory is applicable in sports coaching due to the difficulties female coaches face trying to gain acceptance. Female coaches have a degree of mismatch between their gender role and role as a coach. The thesis has

supported existing findings of Role Congruity Theory and developed the application of this theory in sports coaching using mixed methods.

### *7.3 Implications for practice*

The research presented in this thesis has many implications for practice within sports coaching. For example: dealing with emotional situations, perceptions towards coaches, equality and diversity, mentoring opportunities, policies on maternity leave and dealing with emotional situations.

Male and female coaches need to be aware of how their gender effects athletes' perceptions of them, especially in emotional situations. The results of study one highlights that female coaches are perceived to have more empathic and nurturing relationships with athletes than male coaches, despite similar social interactions taking place. The results also show that male and female coaches were perceived to have more empathy with the female athlete. Coaches, both male and female, need to be aware of these perceptions. UK Sport, sportscotland, national governing bodies and sports clubs should raise awareness of how a coach's gender effects athletes' perceptions of them. Male coaches in particular are more likely to experience scrutiny for a perceived lack of empathy and care which could be mistaken for malpractice. Female coaches due to being perceived as more empathic and nurturing tend to be preferred to work with young athletes (Messner 2009). UK Sport, sportscotland, national governing bodies and sports clubs should consider that placing coaches with particular groups of athletes (e.g., elite, recreational) on the basis of these perceptions is problematic and can often hinder the careers of female coaches.

Athletes need to be made aware that how they perceive coaches has an effect on the coach athlete-relationship. In study three the manipulation of clothing that caused the

female coach to be perceived as masculine/feminine had an impact on how they were perceived. The results of the study show the female coach who was perceived to be masculine was rated higher in coaching competency, relationship quality and empathy with athletes than the perceived feminine coach. In this study the actor and script in all four videos was the same, this suggests that it is important for athletes to be aware of how their perceptions of a coach has an impact on the coach-athlete relationship. UK Sport, sportscotland, national governing bodies and sport clubs should aim to educate athletes that they should avoid using appearance based perceptions to make assumptions of others and to perceive coaches by focusing on good coaching practices.

UK Sport (2010) states in their equality and diversity strategy that:

“UK Sport will take necessary action to eliminate individual and institutional discrimination; to comply with its statutory and legislative obligations; to meet the needs of its staff and partners and to make equality and equal treatment a core issue in the development, delivery and refinement of its policies, initiatives and services and the way it manages its staff.”

Despite the equality and diversity strategies adopted by UK Sport, sportscotland, national governing bodies and sports clubs some female coaches are still struggling to gain equality and remain to be discriminated against. The results of this research found that female coaches' presence in sport is often not accepted, they have difficulties progressing and gaining respect in coaching. This stems from the role incongruity between being a female and a coach. Eagly (2005) suggested that individuals from groups which were not associated with leadership positions, often face difficulties in these positions as they tend to struggle to gain support due to a lack of relational authenticity. The thesis has also found other sources of discrimination in coaching

which stem from being an outsider. The results of study four, demonstrates that the female coach felt she struggled to be accepted in her sport, due to not growing up in the sport and not being an ex-high level athlete. UK Sport, sportscotland and national governing bodies should try to tackle discrimination in sport by raising awareness of the issues through media campaigns, running workshops with athletes and coaches and in coach education. Coach education should place an emphasis on helping coaches to develop effective leadership styles. Female coaches would benefit from learning how to reduce the incongruity between their gender role and leadership role.

In sports coaching the support of other coaches is important (Shaw and Allen 2009). However, Greenhill *et al.* (2009) suggests that it is only a minority of women who manage to gain a mentor. The coach education programmes run by national governing bodies should be altered so that all coaches must have a local and regional mentor assigned to them throughout their involvement in sport coaching. This would prove particularly beneficial to female coaches in terms of their personal development as coaches. The support and mentoring of female coaches by male coaches in particular is known to help develop their confidence and knowledge (Messner 2009). The mentoring of coaches' in particular female coaches should be made a priority within the UK coaching framework (Sport Coach UK 2012) in order to help promote a more diverse coaching workforce.

In sports coaching, there are a lack of policies concerning pregnancy. This may be due to coaching being a predominantly masculine occupation, however, in order to encourage and retain female coaches' policies need to be put in place within the UK coaching framework (Sport Coach UK 2012). The results of study four show how the female coach perceives that she would be unable to be a mother and a coach. Therefore, policies need to be put in place by UK Sport, sportscotland, national governing bodies

and sports clubs to support female coaches throughout pregnancy and place an emphasis on encouraging them to return. These policies should try to mirror those offered in other work place settings.

#### *7.4 Potential future research directions*

The thesis has prompted a variety of possible future directions for research. The results of this programme of research highlights the importance of studying different contexts such as focusing on specific sports and settings (e.g., competition/training). This would be of importance as different sports are known to have varying degrees of associations between masculinity and femininity. It is hypothesised that the expected masculinity/femininity in the sport would affect perceptions towards coaches. It is also important to understand the perceptions towards coaches in different settings. This is of importance as different situations within the coach-athlete relationship may align better with males or females. This research would help to further knowledge on how coaches are perceived within sport.

The results of study 2 showed that perceptions towards a female coach were affected by the perception of masculinity/femininity of the coach based on her clothing. Therefore, it would be of interest to continue this research to determine the extent to which clothing altered perceptions towards female coaches. It would also be important to determine if this effect would be found across specific sports and settings. The research methodology could also be used to look at how perceptions towards female coaches were altered by age (young/old) or leadership style (autocratic/democratic).

Female coaches' individual experiences need to be continued to be explored in order to gain a greater understanding of their experiences within sport. This research offers a real insight into coaches' experiences within sport and is important in furthering

knowledge. It would be of great interest to carry out a longitudinal study to follow a female coach throughout her coaching career. This would help to expand knowledge of female coaches becoming involved in coaching and how they progress. It would also allow for the effects of gender to be monitored across an entire career.

The thesis has highlighted that female coaches tend to dislike attending coach education. Therefore, it would be of interest to conduct a study using a focus group approach looking at the experiences of female coaches at coach education. The results of this study would help to guide governing bodies to improve their education programmes by making them more appealing to female attendees.

The case study within this thesis highlighted the perceived difficulties which are associated with coaching and motherhood. It would be of interest to carry out qualitative studies with female coaches who have had children and continued coaching. It would also be of interest to conduct a case study with a pregnant coach to gain her first hand experiences of pregnancy and coaching. This would further information into this area. It would help to inform policy aimed at encouraging female coaches back to coaching after having a child.

### *7.5 Conclusion*

To conclude, the main findings of this thesis can be summarised as follows. The thesis shows that in terms of how others perceive female coaches they are rated higher than male coaches for relationship quality and empathy when in an emotional scenario and female coaches perceived to be masculine are rated consistently higher within relationship quality and competency in a coaching scenario. This shows how female coaches are potentially more suited to dealing with emotional situations in coaching than male coaches. It also suggests that the appearance of a female coach, in terms of

how it projects masculine or feminine ideals, affects how she is perceived. The thesis shows that in terms of female coaches' experiences that they are affected by their traditional social role associated with gender and by society's gendered perceptions of sport. Sport continues to be a somewhat masculine domain which contributes to hindering the progression of female coaches in a variety of sports. Despite this, female coaches display skills which are beneficial in coaching such as a greater ability to care for athletes than do male coaches. In sports coaching, it has been identified that there are more factors which discourage rather than encourage progression of female coaches. These experiences demonstrate the inequality that is still apparent in sport and that more work is needed to address these issues. Finally, it has shown the perceptions that are held towards female coaches and how these can be altered, but also highlights the experiences of actively involved female coaches.

Sport provides a context in which to study societal norms and relationships. This thesis has studied the effect of societal norms on relationships within sport and how these effect experiences within sport. This programme of research has contributed to the overall field of knowledge in this area. This research has extended existing research and made significant contributions to this area, however further research should continue to be conducted. The findings of this research should encourage future researchers to look at specific sports, the effect of appearance and the role of motherhood in coaching.



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# **APPENDIXES**

# Appendix 1-Script

*[Coach meets athlete standing – centre of shot]*

Coach: Hey, there, thanks for coming to see me.

Athlete: Not a problem coach.

*[Coach gestures at seat and both of them sit down]*

**Shot: centre focusing on coach and athlete**

Coach: I wanted to have a chat to you about your performance; obviously you know that we will be selecting the squad for the upcoming competition.

Athlete: Yeah, I'm really excited about it.

**Shot: centre zooming in to focus on coach and athlete**

Coach: Hmm, ok, so how do you think your training and preparation has been going so far?

**Shot: over athletes shoulder focus on coach.**

Athlete: Good I think coach; I have been training hard and putting in the hours. The assistant coach seems really pleased with my progress.

**Shot: over coachs shoulder focus on athlete.**

Coach: What about your performance?

**Shot: over athletes shoulder focus on coach.**

Athlete: It has been okay. I've not managed to make all of this year's targets, which is disappointing.

**Shot: over coachs shoulder focus on athlete.**

Coach: Why do you think that is?

**Shot: over athletes shoulder focus on coach.**

Athlete: I feel maybe that my fitness is letting me down at the moment which is probably due to missing a few sessions. I am now working really hard to make up for those few lost sessions I have had recently.

**Shot: over coachs shoulder focus on athlete.**

Coach: What are your plans for getting back on track?

**Shot: over athletes shoulder focus on coach.**

Athlete: I'm planning on putting a lot more of my own time into it. I think I need to do a lot more work on my own, not just in the scheduled sessions with you and the other coaches. I'm really working hard to get my fitness right for the selection.

**Shot: over coachs shoulder focus on athlete.**

Coach: I'm impressed you are putting the extra effort it but I'm really sorry to say you're not going to make the cut this time.

**Shot: over athletes shoulder focus on coach.**

Athlete: What? No, I can do it coach. I'll be ready.

**Shot: over coachs shoulder focus on athlete.**

Coach: I'm sorry, but there are others who have seen big performance improvements this last year and are in top form. It would be unfair to not give them their shot.

**Shot: over athletes shoulder focus on coach.**

Athlete: Ok...

**Shot: over coachs shoulder focus on athlete.**

Coach: You have admitted yourself that you have been disappointed with your performance this year. You've only made very small improvements and others are performing more consistently than you. That's why you have been deselected from the squad.

**Shot: over athletes shoulder focus on coach.**

Athlete: ...

**Shot: over coachs shoulder focus on athlete.**

Coach: Try to stay focused; you will have the opportunity to regain your place in the squad if you have some improvements in your performance before our next competition. You should look at this as a chance to work on your fitness and technique so that by the time of our next competition you will have yourself in peak condition. It is only a setback if you let it be one.

**Shot: over athletes shoulder focus on coach.**

Athlete: The problem is coach I have commitments out with sport which I juggle around. It is hard to really put in the effort I want to.

**Shot: over coachs shoulder focus on athlete.**

Coach: I'm sorry about that but all of squad have to balance their commitments. You are going to have to decide what your commitments are and how much you want to be on the squad. I understand that it can be difficult at times but last year you improved considerably at each competition you went to.

**Shot: over athletes shoulder focus on coach.**

Athlete: I have planned this competition into my training. I'm really disappointed that I am not going to be selected. If I'm not at the competition how can I prove that I'm performing at a level where you'd keep me selected?

**Shot: over coachs shoulder focus on athlete.**

Coach: You have other opportunities such as local competitions which if you perform well in will count towards the decision for you to be reselected to the squad for our next competition. I know you're more than capable of performing at the level we are looking for however I need to see evidence of you performing at the level I know you can achieve.

**Shot: over athletes shoulder focus on coach.**

Athlete: Ok I will compete in a few smaller competitions in order to prove my performance is high enough to be included in the squad and I'll try and fit in more of my own training.

**Shot: over coachs shoulder focus on athlete.**

Coach: This may not be something to worry about too much though as this happens to many athletes and it's just a case of working through this phase. You have a plan and this seems like a step in the right direction for you.

**Shot: over athletes shoulder focus on coach.**

Athlete: I'll try my best.

**Shot: over coachs shoulder focus on athlete.**

Coach: Ok it sounds like you have a plan in order for you to get reselected. If you train hard and put in good performances in competitions I'm sure you will secure your space in the squad for the next competition.

**Shot: over athletes shoulder focus on coach.**

Athlete: Okay, best get to back to it.

**Shot- centre focus on coach and athlete**

Coach: I wish you the best of luck.

**Shot- centre focus on coach and athlete**

*[Both stand, shake hands, athlete exits off screen]*

## Appendix 2-Invitation Letter

Paula Murray

Division of Sport and Exercise Sciences

University of Abertay Dundee

DD1 1HG

04/02/2013

Dear

I, Paula Murray, a research student in the Division of Sport and Exercise Sciences, from the University of Abertay Dundee, invite you to participate in a research study investigating how coaches in sport are perceived when interacting with athletes. The purpose of this study is to establish if coaches of different genders are perceived in a different way when working with male and female athletes. I have contacted you because I believe you would make a valuable contribution to this study.

Being involved is very simple, you would be asked to give up 20-30 minutes of your time to watch a series of brief video clips of two different coaches talking to a range of athletes. You would then be asked to rate those coaches on a range of factors regarding how they interact with those athletes. More details are provided on the attached information sheet. You are under no obligation to take part or complete the study.

This research could benefit both coaches and athletes. In particular it has implications for coaches' initial training and CPD. If you have questions or want to be involved in this research then please feel free to contact me using the details at the top of this letter. You can also contact my research supervisor with any pertinent questions (Ross.Lorimer@Abertay.ac.uk).

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Paula Murray

# Appendix 3 - Participant Information Sheet



## Participant Information Sheet

### **The influence of gender on coach-athlete relationship quality and coach empathy**

#### **PART 1**

##### **1. Invitation**

You are being invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information sheet carefully, and discuss it with others if you wish.

##### **1.1 Criteria for participation:**

You have been selected because of your participation in sport. There are no other criteria for your selection other than you being 18+ and being able to consent to participation.

**PART 1** tells you the purpose of this study and what will happen to you if you take part. **PART 2** gives you more detailed information about the conduct of the study.

Ask us if there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

**2. What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose of this study is to see if gender effects perceptions of empathy. Empathy is the way in which one person understands another.

**3. Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form to confirm that you understand what is involved when taking part in this study. If you decide to take part you are free to leave the study at any time and without giving a reason.

**4. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be asked to view video clips, each clip will show a coach discussing with an athlete their decision to deselect them from the team. The video clips will differ in relation to the gender of the coach and athlete. After each video clip you will then be asked to answer a questionnaire. The questionnaires questions will focus on your attitudes towards the coach shown in each video, how well the coach understands the athlete and the way the coach thinks about the athlete. The study will be conducted in two parts. In both parts you will be expected to watch two video clips. The duration on both occasions will be around 20-30minutes.

**5. What are other possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

All procedures have been risk assessed. Data will be anonymous and will be kept secured at all times. You will not be identified in any report or publication.

**6. What happens when the research study stops?**

Results may be published in a scientific journal or presented at a scientific conference. The data will be anonymous and you will not be identified in any report or publication.

**7. What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak with the researchers who will do their best to answer your question.

**8. Will my taking part be kept confidential?**

Yes. All the information about your participation in this study will be kept confidential. The details are included in Part 2.

This completes Part 1 of the Information Sheet. If the information in Part 1 has interested you and you are considering participation, please continue to read the additional information in Part 2 before making any decision.

**PART 2**

**1. What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?**

You are free to leave the study at any time and without giving a reason.

**2. Will my part in this study be kept confidential?**

All the information about your participation in this study will be kept confidential. The information you provide will be anonymous and questionnaire data will be either kept on password protected computers or in locked filing cabinets.

**3. What will happen to the results of this study?**

The results of the study will be available after it finishes. They may be published in a scientific journal or presented at a scientific conference. The data will be anonymous and you will not



be identified in any report or publication. Should you wish to see the results of the study, or the publication, please let us know and we will arrange to provide you with these.

**4. Who is organising and funding this study?**

This is a University of Abertay, Dundee led study.

**5. Contact for further information**

You are encouraged to ask any questions you wish, before, during or after the study. Should you have any queries or concerns at any time please contact Paula Murray (0800974@live.abertay.ac.uk) or Dr Ross Lorimer (01382 308426, Ross.Lorimer@Abertay.ac.uk)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Social and Health Sciences

# Appendix 4 - Informed Consent Form

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that the University of Abertay Dundee has approved all procedures.

- ☐ I have read and understood all information provided and this consent form.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.
- ☐ I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study.
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.
- ☐ I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence.
- ☐ I agree to participate in this study.

Your name

---

Your signature

---

Signature of investigator

---

Date

---

# Appendix 5 – Athlete Questionnaire

## PART ONE

### Demographic Questionnaire

Please fill in honestly.

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male/female

Sport involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years you have been involved in the sport: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender of your current coach/lead coach? Male/Female

Have you had experience of training/coaching with a male and female coach? Yes/No

If no what gender of coach have you not had the experience of training with? \_\_\_\_\_

Current level of participation: Recreational, Regional, National or International

### Questionnaire: Video One

Please circle the number 1-4 that corresponds with how well you think the coach can interact with the athlete for each question. The scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

1. The coach can easily work out what the athlete wants to talk about.	1	2	3	4
2. The coach can tell if the athlete is masking their true feelings.	1	2	3	4
3. The coach can tell if they are intruding, even if the athlete does not tell them.	1	2	3	4
4. The coach is good at predicting how the athlete will feel.	1	2	3	4
5. The coach is good at predicting what the athlete will do.	1	2	3	4
6. The coach is quick to spot when someone in a group is feeling awkward or uncomfortable.	1	2	3	4
7. The coach can pick up quickly if someone says something but means another.	1	2	3	4
8. The coach can easily tell if the athlete is interested or bored with what they are saying.	1	2	3	4
9. The coach can easily tell if someone wants to enter a conversation.	1	2	3	4
10. The coach is told by athletes that he/she is good at understanding what they are feeling and thinking.	1	2	3	4
11. The coach often gets emotionally involved with his/her athletes problems.	1	2	3	4
12. Athletes speak to the coach about their problems as they say the coach is very understanding.	1	2	3	4
13. It affects the coach very much when one of their athletes seems upset.	1	2	3	4
14. The coach gets upset when they see an athlete crying.	1	2	3	4

Please circle the number 1-7 that corresponds to your feelings about the coach and athletes relationship for each question. The scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

15. The coach likes the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. The coach trusts the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. The coach respects the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. The coach appreciates the sacrifices the athlete has experienced to improve performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. The coach is committed to the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. The coach is close to the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. The coach believes the athletes sport career is promising with them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. The coach is at ease with the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

23. The coach is responsive to the athlete's efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. The coach is ready to do his/her best for the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. The coach adopts a friendly stance with the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Questionnaire: video two

Please circle the number 1-4 that corresponds to your feelings for each question. The scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

1. The coach can easily work out what the athlete wants to talk about.	1	2	3	4
2. The coach can tell if the athlete is masking their true feelings.	1	2	3	4
3. The coach can tell if they are intruding, even if the athlete does not tell them.	1	2	3	4
4. The coach is good at predicting how the athlete will feel.	1	2	3	4
5. The coach is good at predicting what the athlete will do.	1	2	3	4
6. The coach is quick to spot when someone in a group is feeling awkward or uncomfortable.	1	2	3	4
7. The coach can pick up quickly if someone says something but means another.	1	2	3	4
8. The coach can easily tell if the athlete is interested or bored with what they are saying.	1	2	3	4
9. The coach can easily tell if someone wants to enter a conversation.	1	2	3	4
10. The coach is told by athletes that he/she is good at understanding what they are feeling and thinking.	1	2	3	4
11. The coach often gets emotionally involved with his/her athletes problems.	1	2	3	4
12. Athletes speak to the coach about their problems as they say the coach is very understanding.	1	2	3	4
13. It affects the coach very much when one of their athletes seems upset.	1	2	3	4
14. The coach gets upset when they see an athlete crying.	1	2	3	4

Please circle the number 1-7 that corresponds to your feelings about the coach and athletes relationship for each question. The scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

15. The coach likes the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. The coach trusts the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. The coach respects the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. The coach appreciates the sacrifices the athlete has experienced to improve performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. The coach is committed to the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

20. The coach is close to the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. The coach believes the athletes sport career is promising with them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. The coach is at ease with the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. The coach is responsive to the athlete's efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. The coach is ready to do his/her best for the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. The coach adopts a friendly stance with the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## PART TWO

### Questionnaire: Video Three

Please circle the number 1-4 that corresponds to your feelings for each question. The scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

1. The coach can easily work out what the athlete wants to talk about.	1	2	3	4
2. The coach can tell if the athlete is masking their true feelings.	1	2	3	4
3. The coach can tell if they are intruding, even if the athlete does not tell them.	1	2	3	4
4. The coach is good at predicting how the athlete will feel.	1	2	3	4
5. The coach is good at predicting what the athlete will do.	1	2	3	4
6. The coach is quick to spot when someone in a group is feeling awkward or uncomfortable.	1	2	3	4
7. The coach can pick up quickly if someone says something but means another.	1	2	3	4
8. The coach can easily tell if the athlete is interested or bored with what they are saying.	1	2	3	4
9. The coach can easily tell if someone wants to enter a conversation.	1	2	3	4
10. The coach is told by athletes that he/she is good at understanding what they are feeling and thinking.	1	2	3	4
11. The coach often gets emotionally involved with his/her athletes problems.	1	2	3	4
12. Athletes speak to the coach about their problems as they say the coach is very understanding.	1	2	3	4
13. It affects the coach very much when one of their athletes seems upset.	1	2	3	4
14. The coach gets upset when they see an athlete crying.	1	2	3	4

Please circle the number 1-7 that corresponds to your feelings about the coach and athletes relationship for each question. The scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

15. The coach likes the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. The coach trusts the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. The coach respects the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. The coach appreciates the sacrifices the athlete has experienced to improve performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. The coach is committed to the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. The coach is close to the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. The coach believes the athletes sport career is promising with them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. The coach is at ease with the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. The coach is responsive to the athlete's efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. The coach is ready to do his/her best for the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. The coach adopts a friendly stance with the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

#### Questionnaire: Video Four

Please circle the number 1-4 that corresponds to your feelings for each question. The scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

1. The coach can easily work out what the athlete wants to talk about.	1	2	3	4
2. The coach can tell if the athlete is masking their true feelings.	1	2	3	4
3. The coach can tell if they are intruding, even if the athlete does not tell them.	1	2	3	4
4. The coach is good at predicting how the athlete will feel.	1	2	3	4
5. The coach is good at predicting what the athlete will do.	1	2	3	4
6. The coach is quick to spot when someone in a group is feeling awkward or uncomfortable.	1	2	3	4
7. The coach can pick up quickly if someone says something but means another.	1	2	3	4
8. The coach can easily tell if the athlete is interested or bored with what they are saying.	1	2	3	4
9. The coach can easily tell if someone wants to enter a conversation.	1	2	3	4
10. The coach is told by athletes that he/she is good at understanding what they are feeling and thinking.	1	2	3	4
11. The coach often gets emotionally involved with his/her athletes problems.	1	2	3	4
12. Athletes speak to the coach about their problems as they say the coach is very understanding.	1	2	3	4



13. It affects the coach very much when one of their athletes seems upset.	1	2	3	4
14. The coach gets upset when they see an athlete crying.	1	2	3	4

Please circle the number 1-7 that corresponds to your feelings about the coach and athletes relationship for each question. The scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

15. The coach likes the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. The coach trusts the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. The coach respects the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. The coach appreciates the sacrifices the athlete has experienced to improve performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. The coach is committed to the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. The coach is close to the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. The coach believes the athletes sport career is promising with them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. The coach is at ease with the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. The coach is responsive to the athlete's efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. The coach is ready to do his/her best for the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. The coach adopts a friendly stance with the athlete.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Appendix 6-Script

*Coach standing with group of athletes*

Coach: Today we are going to be finishing off today's training session by doing a conditioning sprint session. The reason we are doing this session is to help you develop your speed and power. The sprints should be completed at maximum effort so I'm looking for you to build up your speed and be running at your fastest by the end. Today's session will be 4 x 30m sprints. The recovery time will be a walk back recovery. You will all run together so I will start you off. If you can get your running shoes on, have a quick drink and then stand on the line when you're ready.

Athletes as a group: Ok.

*Athlete 2, 3 and 4 stand on the line, athlete 1 is still putting their spikes on. Coach speaks to athlete 1.*

Coach: Can you please hurry up and get those shoes on the rest of the group are waiting on you.

*Athlete 1 continues to get spikes on with increased urgency. Athlete then stands on the line.*

Athlete 1: Sorry I'm ready now coach.

Coach: Get set

*Athletes run 30m coach observes. Athlete 2 has run deliberately slow in the 1<sup>st</sup> 30m sprint. Athletes have a walk back recovery to the line. The coach pulls athlete 2 to the side to discuss their first run.*

Coach: I know you don't enjoy these sprint sessions but they are crucial towards your development in your event. If you work hard and develop the speed during the offseason by next season you will see the benefits in your performances.

8. Athlete 2: Ok I will try harder in the next runs. I want to improve my performances next year.

*Athlete 2 lines back up on start line with other athletes*

9. Coach: Remember these runs are max effort. Get set...GO!

*Athletes run 30m coach observes. Coach notices that athlete 2 has put more effort in. Coach notices athlete 3 isn't using their arms when they run. Coach pulls athlete 2 and 3 to the side.*

Coach: That last run was done at the speed I would expect from you. Try and maintain that effort on the next 3 runs.

Athlete 2: I will try.

Coach: I have noticed on the last few runs that you haven't been using your arms. On these next runs can you focus on using them this will help you to generate more speed. It will also improve your running technique.

Athlete 3: Ok coach

*Athlete lines up on start line*

Coach: Get set go.

Athletes run 30m coach observes.

Coach: Well done, we have one more left to do. Let's make this your fastest one yet.

Athletes: Ok

Coach: Get set

*Athlete 4 starts to run before coach says go*

Coach: STOP! Wait for the go if you run early you are only cheating yourself. It is also important that you are waiting for the go so that you are improving your reaction times. Last time remember your running your fastest on this run.

Athletes: OK

Coach: Get set go.

*Athletes run 30m coach observes. All athletes run their fastest. Coach addresses all athletes when they walk back.*

Coach: Great session. You all worked very hard. If you all keep this level of effort up, I can see you all meeting your targets for next year. If you go for a cool down lap and make sure you stretch off. I will see you all again on Monday.

# Appendix 7-Invitation Letter

Paula Murray

Division of Sport and Exercise Sciences

University of Abertay Dundee

DD1 1HG

Dear

I, Paula Murray, a research student in the Division of Sport and Exercise Sciences, from the University of Abertay Dundee, invite you to participate in a research study investigating how coaches in sport are perceived when interacting with athletes. The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of how athletes perceive coaches. I have contacted you because I believe you would make a valuable contribution to this study.

Being involved is very simple, you would be asked to give up 20-30 minutes of your time to watch two brief video clips of a female coach coaching a group of athletes. You would then be asked to rate the coach on a range of factors regarding how they interact with those athletes. More details are provided on the attached information sheet. You are under no obligation to take part or complete the study.

This research could benefit both coaches and athletes. In particular it has implications for coaches' initial training and CPD. If you have questions or want to be involved in this research then please feel free to contact me using the details at the top of this letter. You can also contact my research supervisor with any pertinent questions ([Ross.Lorimer@Abertay.ac.uk](mailto:Ross.Lorimer@Abertay.ac.uk)).

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Paula Murray

# Appendix 8-Participant Information Sheet

How masculinity/femininity influences the perceptions of a female coach's relationship with  
their athletes

## Invitation

You are being invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information sheet carefully, and discuss it with others if you wish. You have been selected because of your participation in sport. There are no other criteria for your selection other than you being 16+ and being able to consent to participation.

## What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of how athletes perceive female coaches.

## Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form to confirm that you understand what is involved when taking part in this study. If you decide to take part you are free to leave the study at any time and without giving a reason.

## What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to view video clips, each clip will show a female coach coaching a group of athletes. The video clips will differ in relation to the athletes. After each video clip you will then be asked to answer a questionnaire. The questionnaires questions will focus on your attitudes towards the coach shown in each video, how well the coach understands the athlete and the way the coach thinks about the athlete. You will be required to watch two video clips. The duration of the study will be around 20-30minutes.

What are other possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

All procedures have been risk assessed. Data will be anonymous and will be kept secured at all times. If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak with the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions.

What happens when the research study stops?

Results may be published in a scientific journal or presented at a scientific conference. The data will be anonymous and you will not be identified in any report or publication. Should you wish to see the results of the study, or the publication, please let us know and we will arrange to provide you with these.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

You are free to leave the study at anytime and without giving a reason.

Will my part in this study be kept confidential?

The information you provide will be anonymous and will be either kept on password protected computers or in locked filing cabinets.

Who is organising and funding this study?

This is a University of Abertay Dundee led study.

Contact for further information

You are encouraged to ask any questions you wish. Should you have any queries or concerns at any time please contact Paula Murray (0800974@live.abertay.ac.uk) or supervisor Dr Ross Lorimer (R.Lorimer2@abertay.ac.uk).

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Social and Health Sciences*

# Appendix 9-Informed Consent Form

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that the University of Abertay Dundee has approved all procedures.

- ☐ I have read and understood all information provided and this consent form.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.
- ☐ I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study.
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.
- ☐ I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence.
- ☐ I agree to participate in this study.

Your name

---

Your signature

---



Signature of investigator

---

Date

---

# Appendix 10-Questionnaire

## PART ONE

### Demographic Questionnaire

Please fill in honestly.

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male/Female

Sport: \_\_\_\_\_

How long in years have you been involved in this sport: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender of your current lead/head coach? Male/Female

Have you had experience of being coached by male and female coaches? Yes/No

Current level of participation: Recreational, Regional, National or International

## PART TWO

### Questionnaire: video one

Instructions: After you are finished watching the video, answer the following questions. Please answer the questions based on how you feel about the coach you have just seen in the video. Please circle the number 1-11 that corresponds to your feelings for each question. 1 (being not at all) and 11 (being very much).

1. I would like her as a coach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2. Her being near me might break my concentration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
3. She could make me want to train better.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
4. She might be a head coach in 20 years.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
5. I could take it when she tells me I did something wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6. I would have confidence that she is a good coach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
7. I could take orders from her easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
8. I could not take punishment from her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9. I could tell her things easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10. I might expect her to give praise and say nice things easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
11. I might feel angry if she yelled at me while I was training.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

Please circle the number 1-4 that corresponds with how well you think the coach has interacted with the athletes for each question. The scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

12. The coach can easily work out what an athlete wants to talk about.	1	2	3	4
13. The coach can tell if an athlete is masking their true feelings.	1	2	3	4
14. The coach can tell if they are intruding, even if an athlete does not tell them.	1	2	3	4

15. The coach is good at predicting how an athlete will feel.	1	2	3	4
16. The coach is good at predicting what an athlete will do.	1	2	3	4
17. The coach is quick to spot when someone in a group is feeling awkward or uncomfortable.	1	2	3	4
18. The coach can pick up quickly if someone says something but means another.	1	2	3	4
19. The coach can easily tell if an athlete is interested or bored with what they are saying.	1	2	3	4
20. The coach can easily tell if someone wants to enter a conversation.	1	2	3	4
21. The coach is told by athletes that she is good at understanding what they are feeling and thinking.	1	2	3	4
22. The coach often gets emotionally involved with his/her athletes problems.	1	2	3	4
23. Athletes speak to the coach about their problems as they say the coach is very understanding.	1	2	3	4
24. It affects the coach very much when one of their athletes seems upset.	1	2	3	4
25. The coach gets upset when they see an athlete crying.	1	2	3	4

Please circle the number 1-7 that corresponds to your feelings about the coach and athletes relationship for each question. The scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

26. The coach likes the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. The coach trusts the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. The coach respects the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. The coach appreciates the sacrifices the athletes have experienced to improve performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. The coach is committed to the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. The coach is close to the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. The coach believes the athletes sport career is promising with them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. The coach is at ease with the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. The coach is responsive to the athletes' efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. The coach is ready to do her best for the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

36. The coach adopts a friendly stance with the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Please circle the number 0-4 that corresponds to your feelings about the coach in the video for each question. The scale is 0 (complete incompetence) to 4 (complete competence).

***How competent is the coach in the video in her ability to-***

37. help athletes maintain confidence in themselves?	0	1	2	3	4
38. recognize opposing competitors strengths during competition?	0	1	2	3	4
39. mentally prepare her athletes for competition strategies?	0	1	2	3	4
40. understand competitive strategies?	0	1	2	3	4
41. instill an attitude of good moral character?	0	1	2	3	4
42. build the self-esteem of her athletes?	0	1	2	3	4
43. demonstrate the skills of her sport?	0	1	2	3	4
44. adapt to different situations?	0	1	2	3	4
45. recognize opposing competitors weakness during competition?	0	1	2	3	4
46. motivate her athletes?	0	1	2	3	4
47. make critical decisions during competition?	0	1	2	3	4
48. build team cohesion?	0	1	2	3	4
49. instill an attitude of fair play among her athletes?	0	1	2	3	4
50. coach individual athletes on technique?	0	1	2	3	4
51. build the self-confidence of her athletes?	0	1	2	3	4
52. develop athletes' abilities?	0	1	2	3	4
53. maximize her athletes strengths during competition?	0	1	2	3	4
54. recognize talent in athletes?	0	1	2	3	4
55. promote good sportsmanship?	0	1	2	3	4
56. detect skill errors?	0	1	2	3	4
57. adjust her strategy to fit her athletes talent?	0	1	2	3	4
58. teach the skills of her sport?	0	1	2	3	4
59. build team confidence?	0	1	2	3	4
60. instil an attitude of respect for others?	0	1	2	3	4

Please circle the number on the scale that you feel corresponds to the coach in the video:

5	4	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Masculine							Feminine				

### Questionnaire: video two

Instructions: After you are finished watching the video, answer the following questions. Please answer the questions based on how you feel about the coach you have just seen in the video. Please circle the number 1-11 that corresponds to your feelings for each question. 1 (being not at all) and 11 (being very much).

1. I would like her as a coach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2. Her being near me might break my concentration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
3. She could make me want to train better.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
4. She might be a head coach in 20 years.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
5. I could take it when she tells me I did something wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6. I would have confidence that she is a good coach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
7. I could take orders from her easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
8. I could not take punishment from her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9. I could tell her things easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10. I might expect her to give praise and say nice things easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
11. I might feel angry if she yelled at me while I was training.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

Please circle the number 1-4 that corresponds with how well you think the coach has interacted with the athletes for each question. The scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

12. The coach can easily work out what an athlete wants to talk about.	1	2	3	4
13. The coach can tell if an athlete is masking their true feelings.	1	2	3	4
14. The coach can tell if they are intruding, even if an athlete does not tell them.	1	2	3	4
15. The coach is good at predicting how an athlete will feel.	1	2	3	4
16. The coach is good at predicting what an athlete will do.	1	2	3	4

17. The coach is quick to spot when someone in a group is feeling awkward or uncomfortable.	1	2	3	4
18. The coach can pick up quickly if someone says something but means another.	1	2	3	4
19. The coach can easily tell if an athlete is interested or bored with what they are saying.	1	2	3	4
20. The coach can easily tell if someone wants to enter a conversation.	1	2	3	4
21. The coach is told by athletes that she is good at understanding what they are feeling and thinking.	1	2	3	4
22. The coach often gets emotionally involved with his/her athletes problems.	1	2	3	4
23. Athletes speak to the coach about their problems as they say the coach is very understanding.	1	2	3	4
24. It affects the coach very much when one of their athletes seems upset.	1	2	3	4
25. The coach gets upset when they see an athlete crying.	1	2	3	4

Please circle the number 1-7 that corresponds to your feelings about the coach and athletes relationship for each question. The scale is 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

26. The coach likes the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. The coach trusts the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. The coach respects the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. The coach appreciates the sacrifices the athletes have experienced to improve performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. The coach is committed to the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. The coach is close to the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. The coach believes the athletes sport career is promising with them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. The coach is at ease with the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. The coach is responsive to the athletes' efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. The coach is ready to do her best for the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. The coach adopts a friendly stance with the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



*How competent is the coach in the video in her ability to-*

Please circle the number on the scale that you feel corresponds to the coach in the video:

Masculine

241

## **Appendix 11-Invitation Letter**

Hi

I am a postgraduate researcher at Abertay University and we are looking for female coaches to take part in a short study. As part of the study all you are required to do is take part in an interview. You will be asked about your experiences sports coaching and about athletes' perceptions towards you. This shouldn't take any more than 90 minutes. If you are interested or think you know someone who can help out contact me on [0800974@live.abertay.ac.uk](mailto:0800974@live.abertay.ac.uk).

Regards  
Paula Murray

# Appendix 12-Participant Information Sheet

## Female coaches experiences in sports coaching

### Invitation

You are being invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information sheet carefully, and discuss it with others if you wish. You have been selected because of your participation in sport. There are no other criteria for your selection other than you being 16+ and being able to consent to participation.

### What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to gain an insight into the experiences of female coaches in sports coaching and the perceptions that athletes have towards them.

### Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form to confirm that you understand what is involved when taking part in this study. If you decide to take part you are free to leave the study at any time and without giving a reason.

### What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part you will be interviewed about your experience sports coaching. Interviews will typically be 60 to 90 minutes in duration and will be fully audio-recorded. These interviews will take place in a private and secure location mutually agreed between the investigator and participant. The interviews will then be transcribed verbatim into Word documents. At all times, audio and written data will be kept secured by the investigators.

### What are other possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

All procedures have been risk assessed. Data will be anonymous and will be kept secured at all times. If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak with the researchers who will do their best to answer your question.

What happens when the research study stops?

Results may be published in a scientific journal or presented at a scientific conference. The data will be anonymous and you will not be identified in any report or publication. Should you wish to see the results of the study, or the publication, please let us know and we will arrange to provide you with these.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

You are free to leave the study at any time and without giving a reason.

Will my part in this study be kept confidential?

The information you provide will be anonymous and will be either kept on password protected computers or in locked filing cabinets.

Who is organising and funding this study?

This is a University of Abertay Dundee led study.

Contact for further information

You are encouraged to ask any questions you wish. Should you have any queries or concerns at any time please contact Paula Murray (0800974@live.abertay.ac.uk) or supervisor Dr Ross Lorimer (R.Lorimer2@abertay.ac.uk).

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Social and Health Sciences*

# Appendix 13-Informed Consent Form

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that the University of Abertay Dundee has approved all procedures.

- ☐ I have read and understood all information provided and this consent form.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.
- ☐ I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study.
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.
- ☐ I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence.
- ☐ I agree to participate in this study.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of investigator \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix 14-Interview Schedule

## BACKGROUND AND ICE BREAKER

- What sport do you coach?
- What are your coaching qualifications?
- How many years have you been involved in coaching?
- Where do you coach/What is your role there?
- Can you describe the types of the athletes you work with?
  - What factors influence how you see athletes?

## PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

- How do you think your athletes view you?
  - Competency, technical knowledge, skill level etc.
- Why do you think your athletes view you in this way?
  - What factors do you think influence those perceptions?
  - What do you think athletes/coaches focus on to create impressions of coaches?
- How well do you understand your athletes?
  - What factors do you think influence those perceptions?
- How well do you think your athletes understand you?
  - What factors do you think influence those perceptions?
- Can you give an example of when you were able to predict and weren't able to predict the feelings and actions of one of your athletes?

## COACH GENDER

- How do you think your gender has influenced your experiences of coaching?
  - Becoming involved in coaching?
  - Career progression?
  - Way other coaches view you?
  - How athletes view you?
  - How you view athletes?
- Do you think your gender influences ...
  - How athletes view you?
  - How other coaches view you?
  - How you coach and work with your athletes?
  - Your ability to understand your athletes?
  - Your athletes' ability to understand you?
  - Your ability to give instructions to athletes?
  - How athletes react to your instructions?
- Do you think people have preconceived ideas about female coaches?
  - Do you think this varies by sport?
  - Is this influenced by the gender of the athletes the coach works with?
  - Is this influenced by the gender tradition of the sport?

#### **ATHLETE GENDER**

- Do you think an athlete's gender influences how they are coached/want to be coached?
- Is there a difference in your level of understanding between male and female athletes?
- Do you think people have preconceived ideas about athletes of a particular gender?

## **WORKING TOGETHER**

- Do you think a female coach would be seen as more likable by a particular gender of athlete?
- Do you think a female coach would be seen as more committed to an athlete based on their gender?
- Do you think coaches and athletes of a certain mix of genders are more easily able to work with each other?
- How do you think the gender of a coach and an athlete affects their ability to understand each other?
- Do you think female coach acts differently when working with male and female athletes?
  - If so, how and why?

## **SPECIFIC SPORTS**

- Do you think there is a bias towards a particular gender in your sport?
- How do you think the sport a female coach works in influences how they are perceived?
- Do you think a female coach would act differently if they were working in a traditionally 'masculine' sport compared to a 'feminine' sport?
  - If so, how and why?

## **CLOSING**

- How important do you think gender is in sports coaching?
- Is there anything else you'd like to add?



# Appendix 15-Participant Information Sheet

## **A gendered exploration of the life of a female trampoline coach: A case study**

### Invitation

You are being invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information sheet carefully, and discuss it with others if you wish. You have been selected because of your participation in sport. There are no other criteria for your selection other than you being 16+ and being able to consent to participation.

### What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to gain an insight into the experiences of female coaches in sports coaching and the perceptions that athletes have towards them.

### Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form to confirm that you understand what is involved when taking part in this study. If you decide to take part you are free to leave the study at any time and without giving a reason.

### What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part you will be interviewed about your experience sports coaching. Interviews will typically be 60 to 90 minutes in duration and will be fully audio-recorded. These interviews will take place in a private and secure location mutually agreed between the

investigator and participant. The interviews will then be transcribed verbatim into Word documents. At all times, audio and written data will be kept secured by the investigators.

What are other possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

All procedures have been risk assessed. Data will be anonymous and will be kept secured at all times. If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak with the researchers who will do their best to answer your question.

What happens when the research study stops?

Results may be published in a scientific journal or presented at a scientific conference. The data will be anonymous and you will not be identified in any report or publication. Should you wish to see the results of the study, or the publication, please let us know and we will arrange to provide you with these.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

You are free to leave the study at any time and without giving a reason. The information you provide will be anonymous and will be either kept on password protected computers or in locked filing cabinets.

Contact for further information

You are encouraged to ask any questions you wish. Should you have any queries or concerns at any time please contact Paula Murray (0800974@live.abertay.ac.uk) or supervisor Dr Ross Lorimer (R.Lorimer2@abertay.ac.uk).

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Social and Health Sciences*

# Appendix 16-Informed Consent Form

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that the University of Abertay Dundee has approved all procedures.

- ☐ I have read and understood all information provided and this consent form.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.
- ☐ I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study.
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.
- ☐ I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence.
- ☐ I agree to participate in this study.

Your name

---

Your signature

---

Signature of investigator

---

Date

---

# Appendix 17-Interview Schedule

## Phase 1 (Introduction)

- Summary of participant's transcript from study 3 (verification)
- Overview of main points identified
- Outline of interview purpose (life-span analysis)

## Phase 2 (Life span overview and foundation)

- Early involvements in sport and first experiences of sport coached
- Initiation into coaching
  - Role models
  - Athlete groups worked with
- Progression in coaching
  - Barriers
  - Inspirations
  - Contemporaries
  - Changing contexts
  - Infrastructure
- Pinnacles of coaching
  - Barriers
  - Inspirations
  - Contemporaries
  - Changing contexts
  - Infrastructure
- Exit from coaching
  - Reasoning
  - Future directions

## Phase 3 (Underpinning and exploration of previous themes)

- Focus on key stories from phase 2
- Core themes
  - Appearance based perceptions
  - Physical difficulties associated with coaching
  - Higher levels of coaching associated with males
  - Mothering nature of care in coaching
  - Older female athletes easier to work with than male athletes

## Phase 4 (Trustworthiness and authenticity)

- Ongoing mirroring
- Rephrasing
- Checks of understanding

